

Investi GATORS

Heist and Seek



New York Times-Bestselling Author

John Patrick Green

Investi GATORS

Heist and Seek

:01
First Second

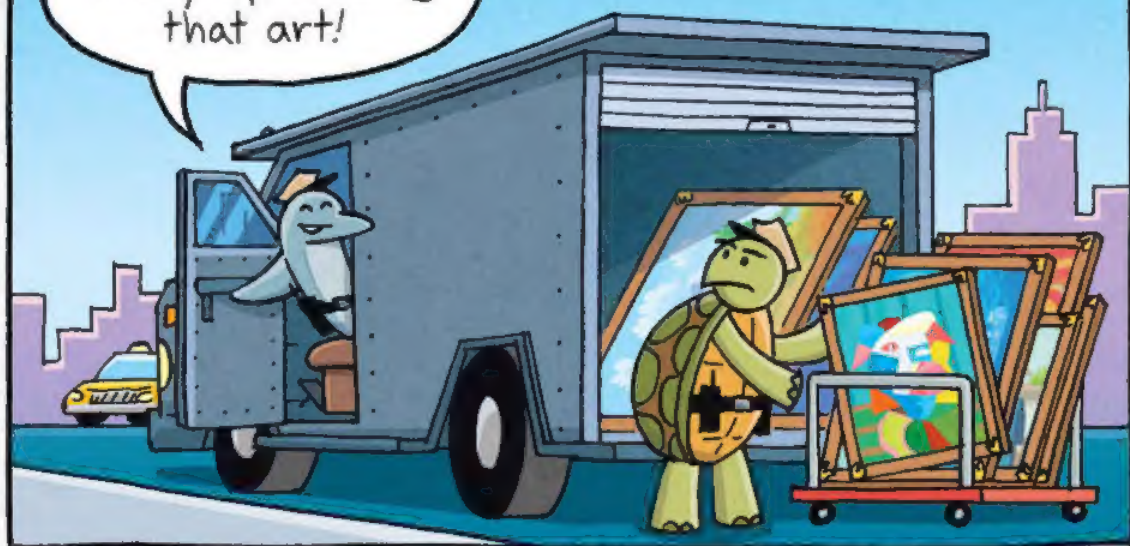


Chapter 1

It's an exciting day, as precious cargo enters the country...



Hurry up loading that art!



...and makes its way toward the city!

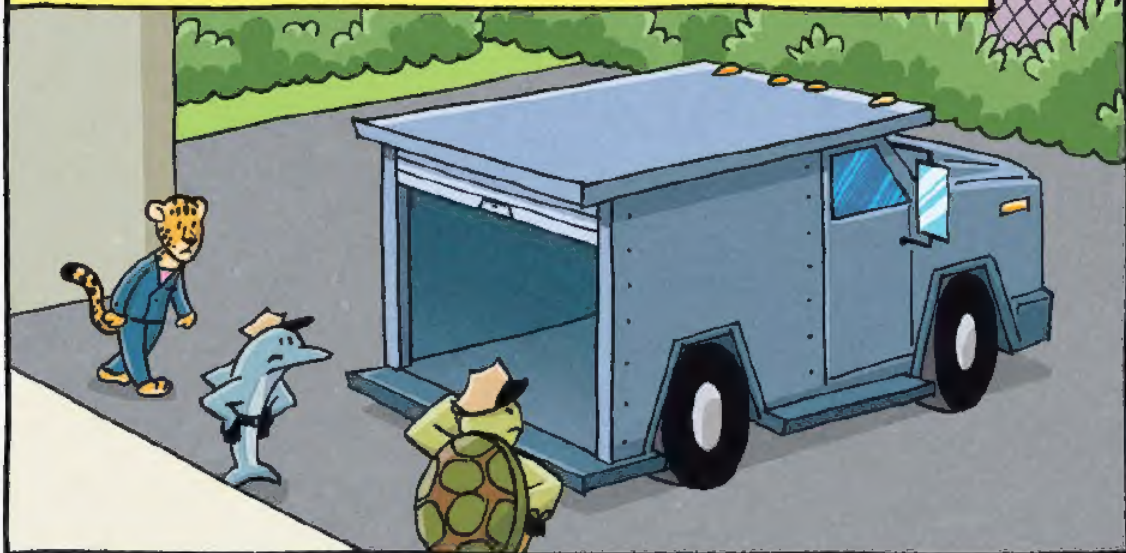




But when it's time to remove the contents...



Who can solve this mystery? This is a job for...



DETECTIVE COLE!



With the city's best detective
my hostage, the mayor has no
choice but to pay my ransom,
or I'll turn this town into *dust*!



Well, not *dust*.
Sugar. Because I
like to eat sugar.



You may be a *weevil*...but you don't
have to be *EVIL*! Listen to me—

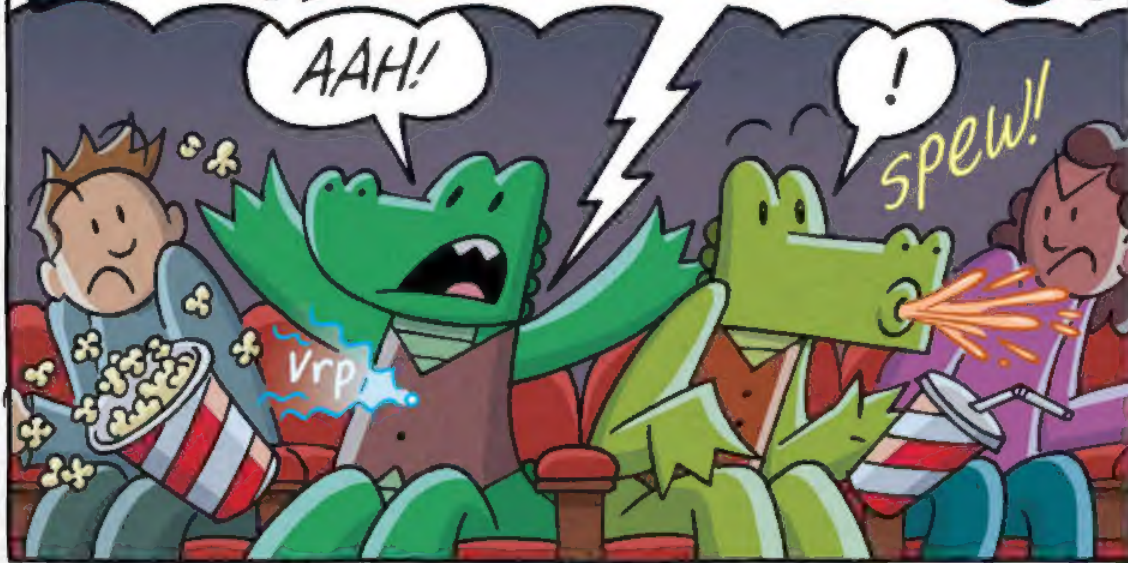


To *YOU*? The only leafy green
I listen to is *COLD, HARD CASH*!

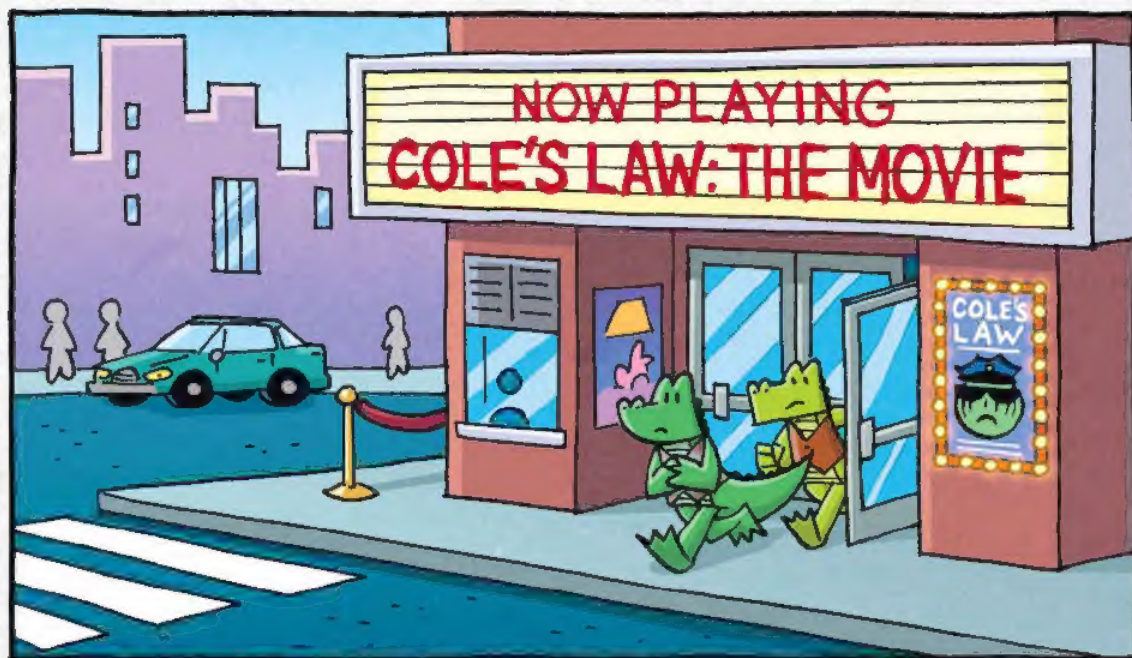
NO ONE CAN STOP ME! Not even the—

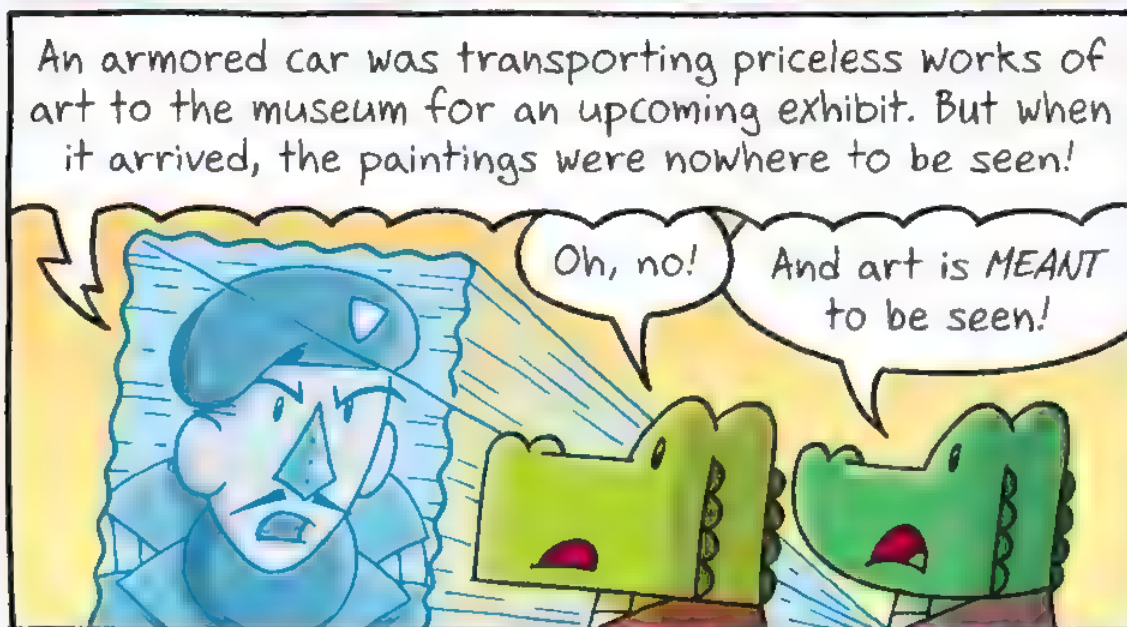


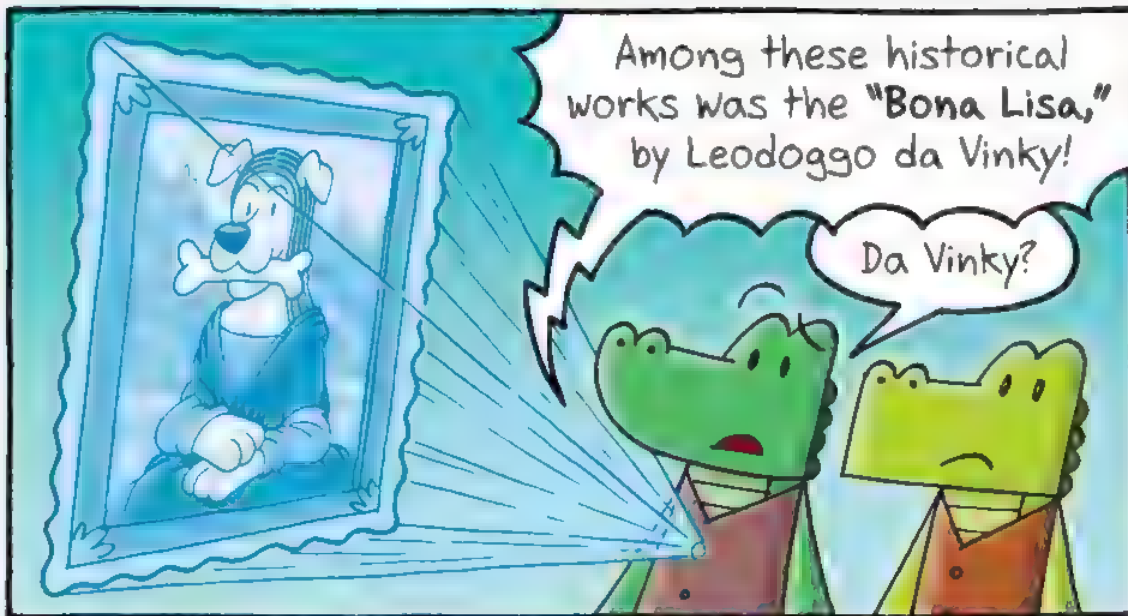
INVESTIGATORS!

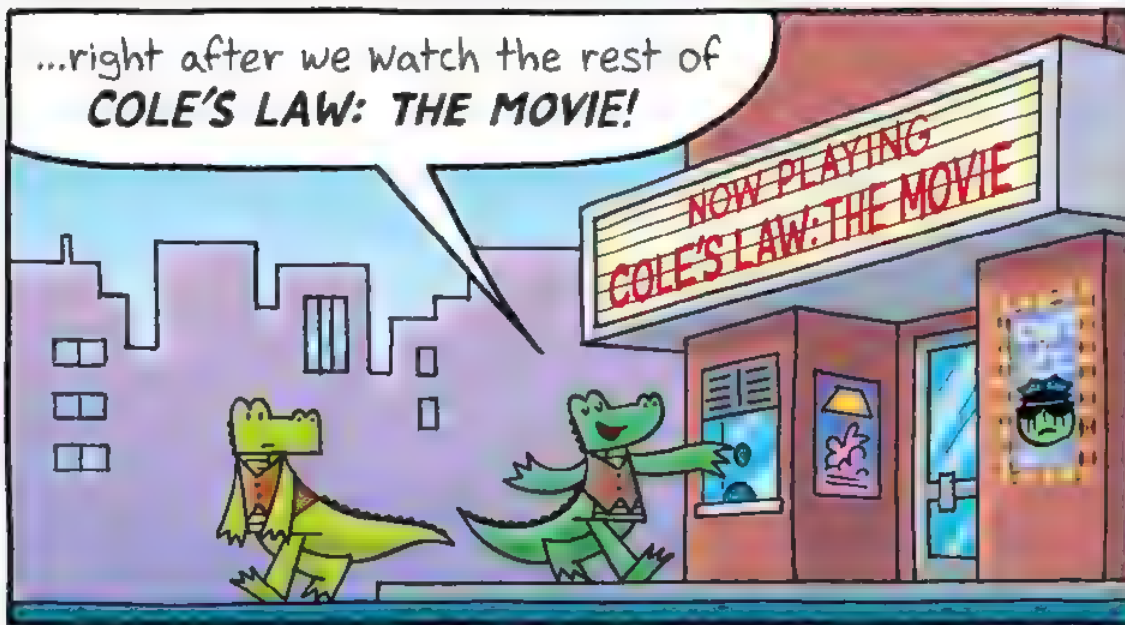


*Very Exciting Spy Technology

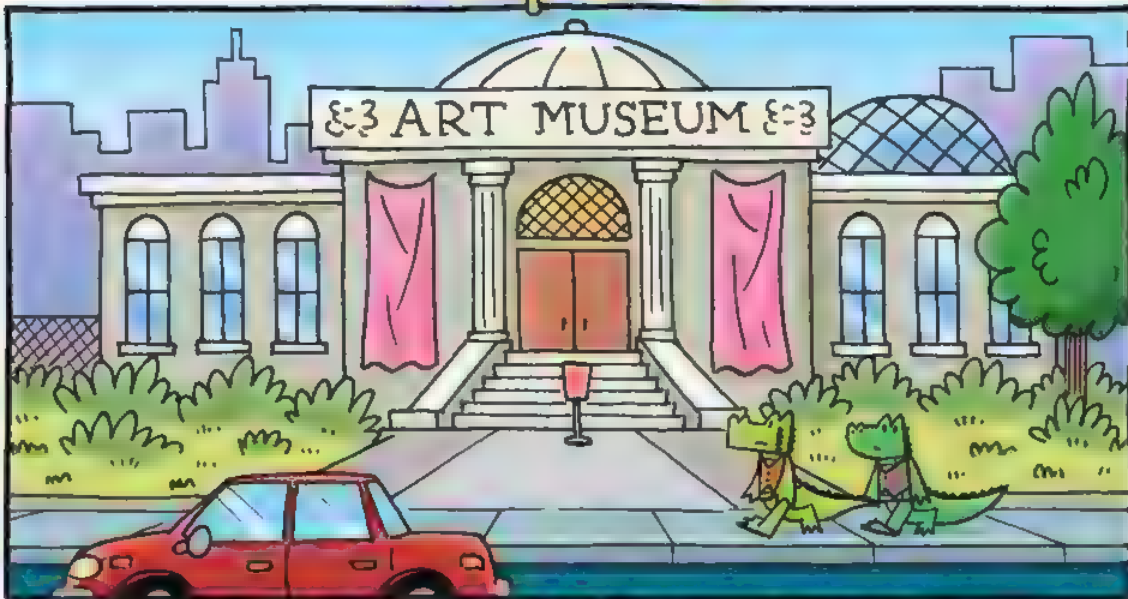




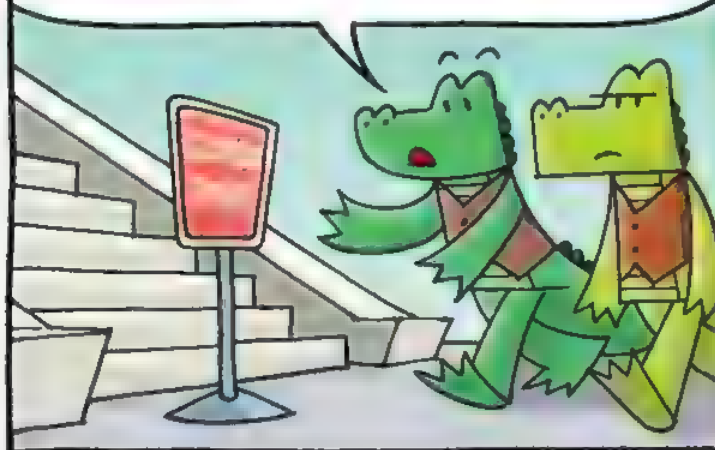




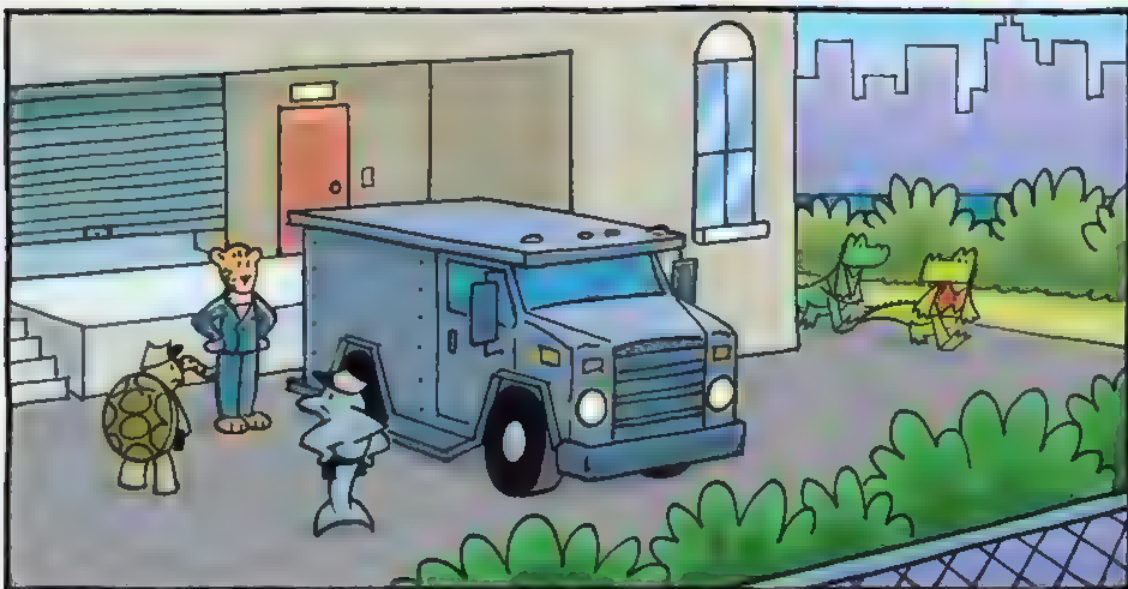
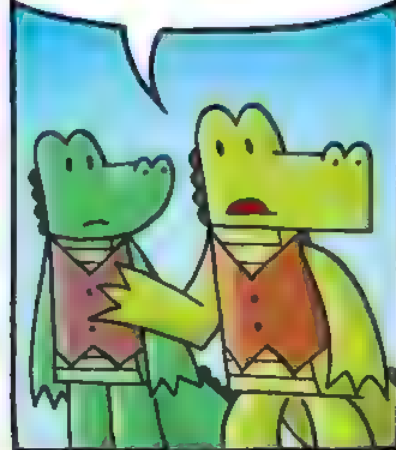
Chapter 2



Dang, it's closed. Guess we'll just have to go see a movie instead.



Let's find the staff entrance.







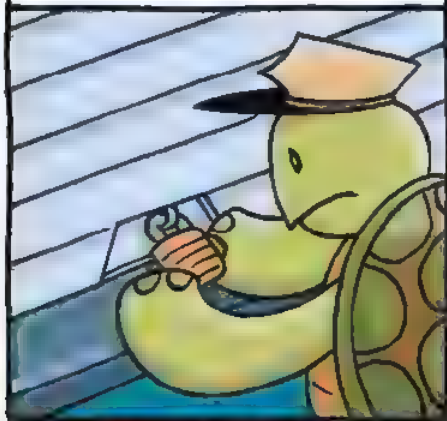
*Special Undercover Investigation Teams



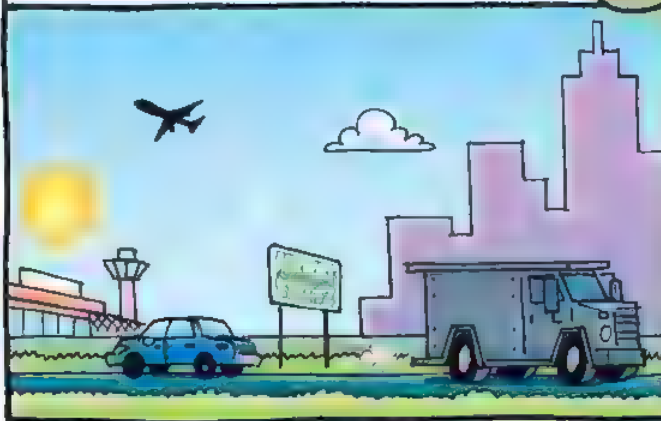
We picked the art up at the airport this morning...



...made sure it was safe and secure...



...and drove right back to the museum!

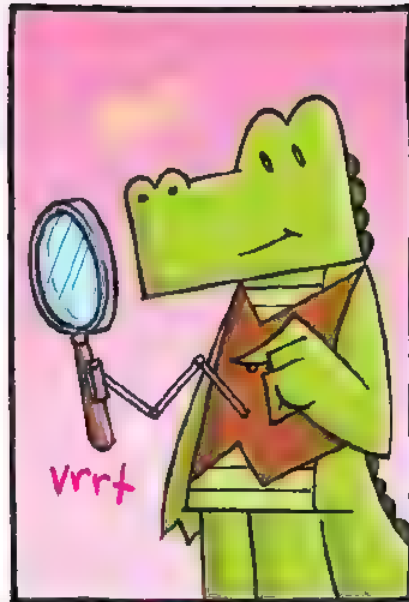


Did you make any stops along the way?

None! You know, except for red lights and stop signs.

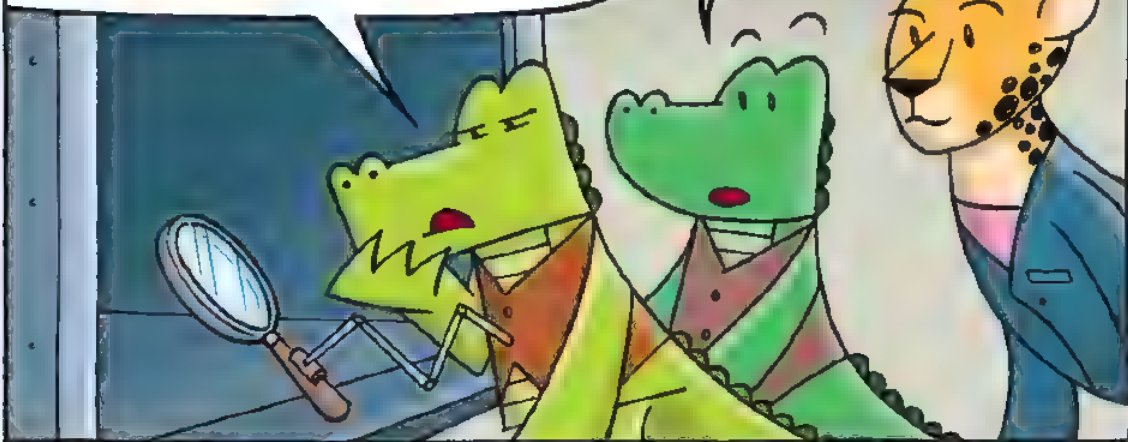


But when we opened 'er up,
the van was *completely empty!*



Hmm... This clearly wasn't the
work of a mere cat burglar.

Meerkat?



Can't explain it any better than we
could the last time this happened.

How long ago
was that?



Yesterday!

Almost EVERY piece of art for the gala vanished outta this van on its way to the museum.



The big red-carpet shindig later this week.



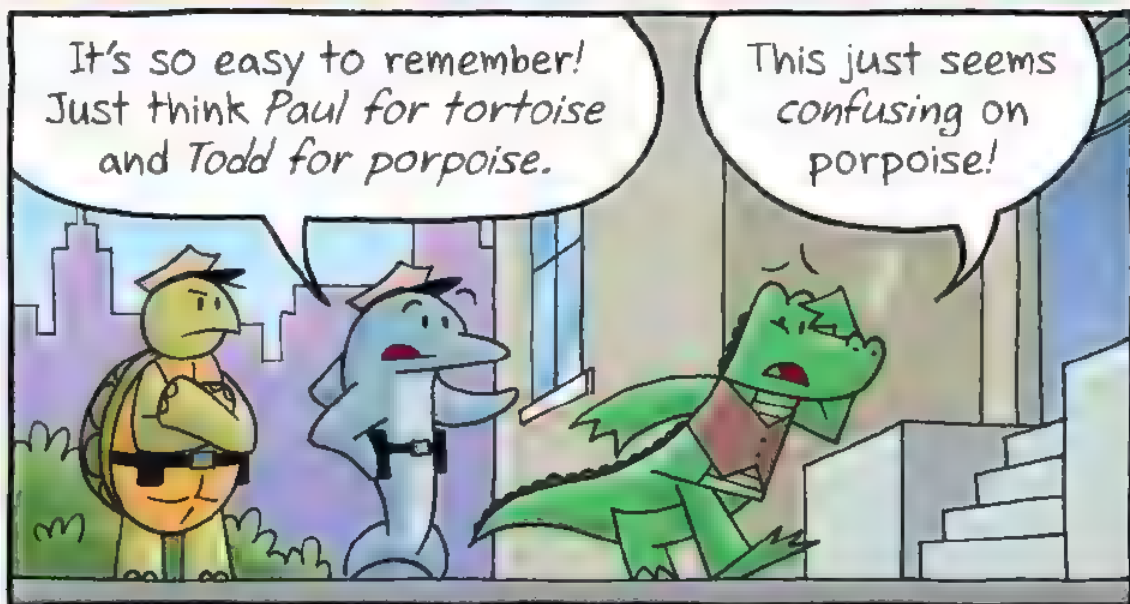
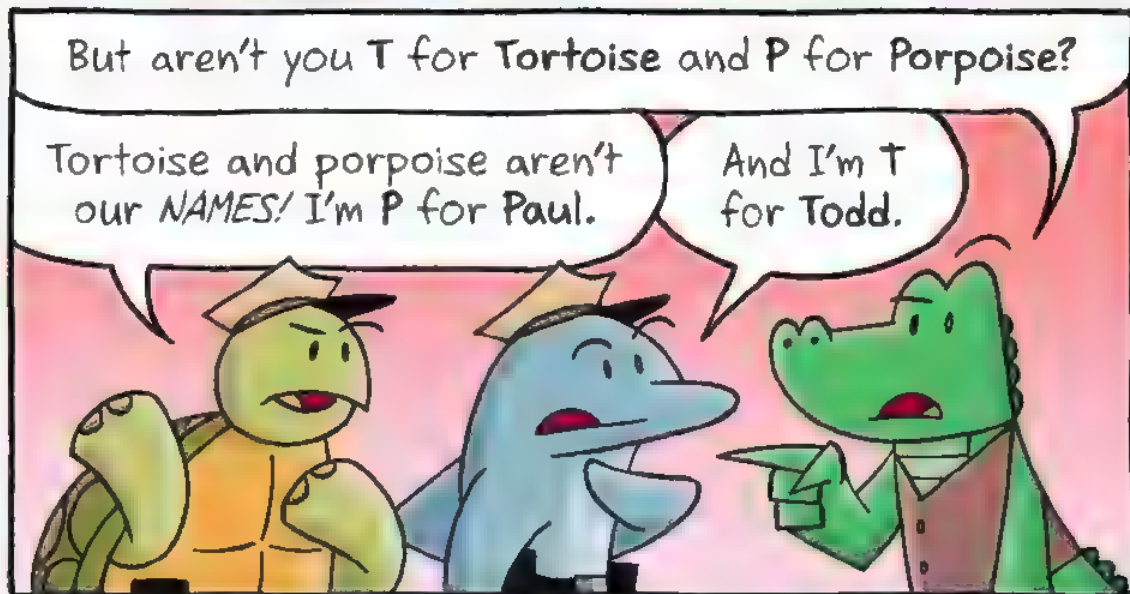
Is any more art expected to arrive for this gala?



My boss, the museum curator, would know. You can find him inside.

Thanks, Savanna.



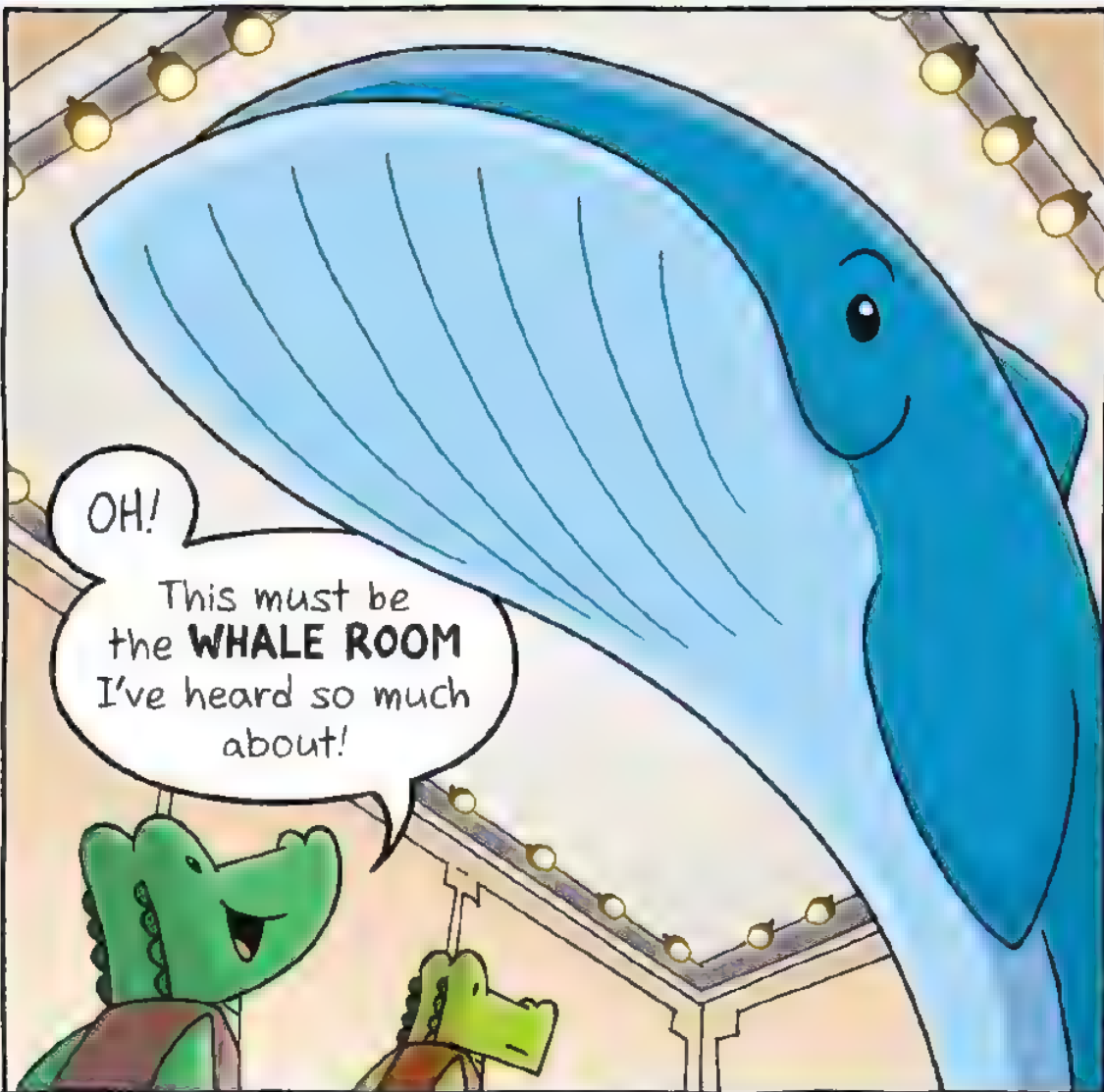
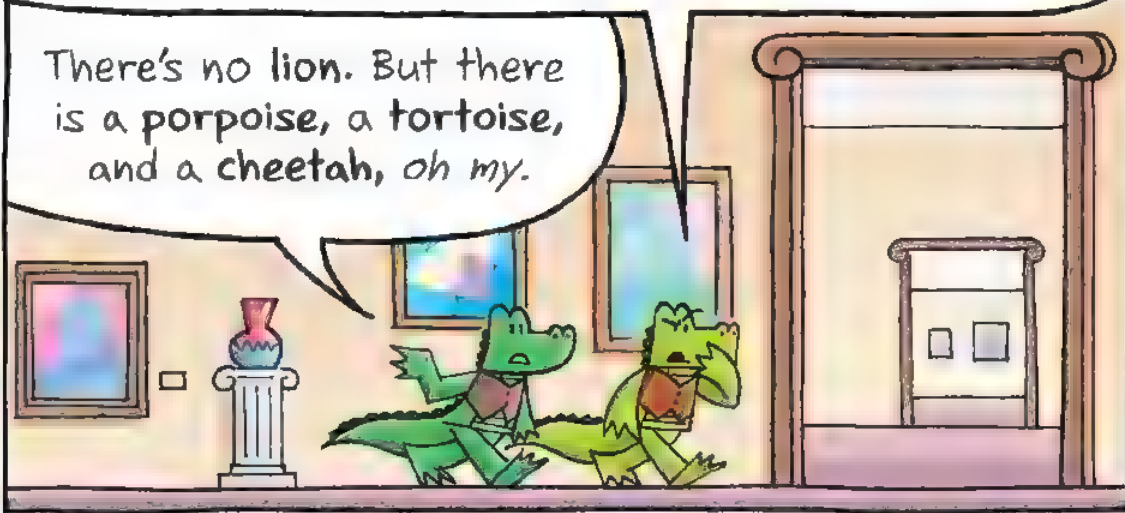


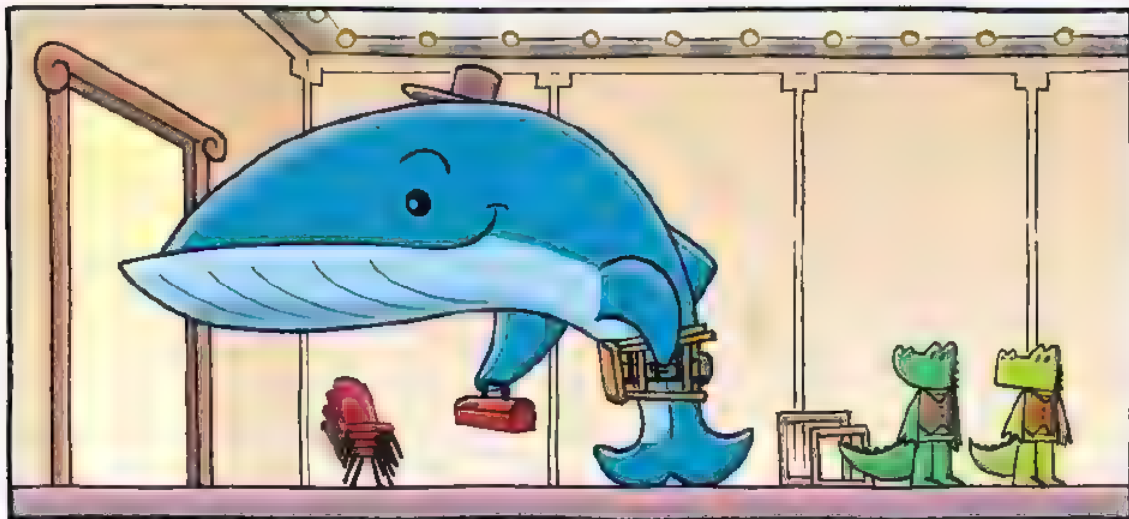
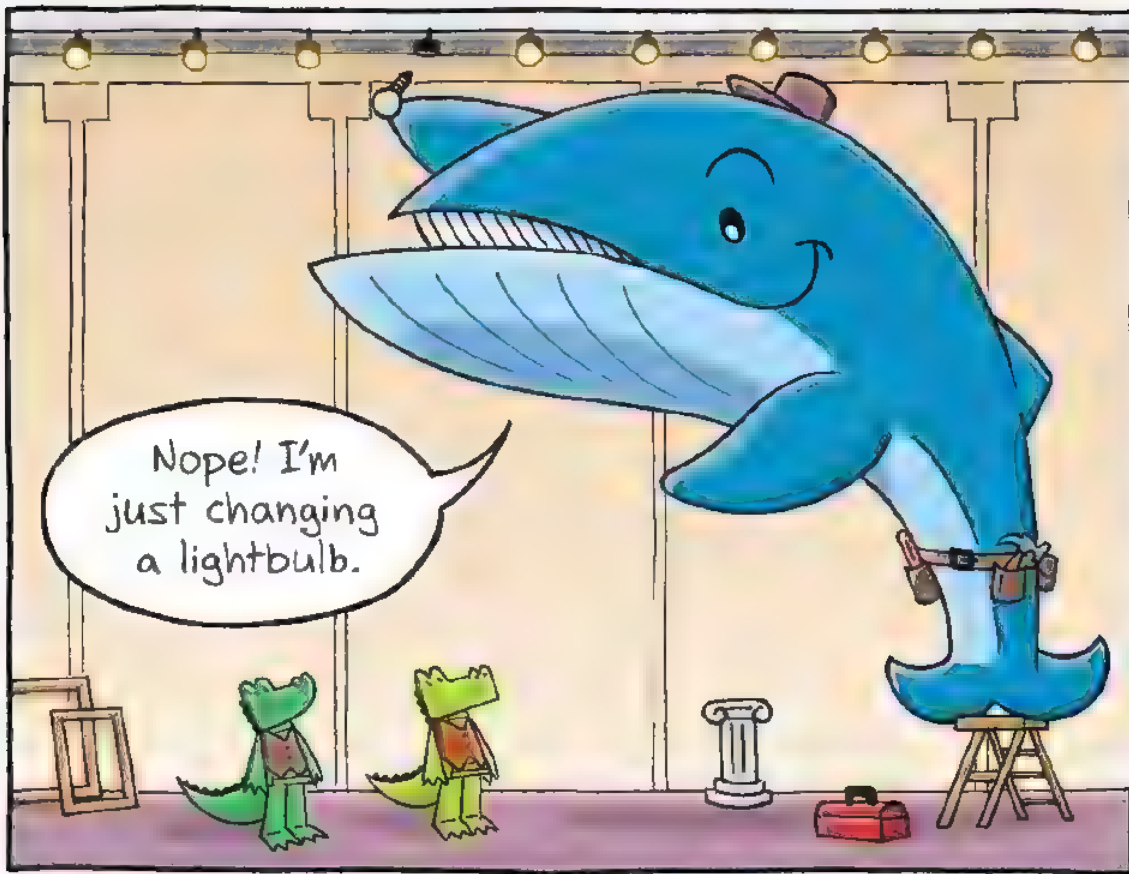
Chapter 3



Someone got in and out of that armored car while it was moving without the security guards even noticing? I say there's a chance one or both of 'em are lyin'.

There's no lion. But there is a porpoise, a tortoise, and a cheetah, oh my.







You must be here about the missing paintings! I am the museum curator and registrar, Thelonious Snoot.

Snoot? That's a funny name.
Anyway, my name's Mango.

Boop

Your staff told us all
of that art was for
an upcoming gala?

It's our *GRANDEST*
event of the year. I
had the most famous
paintings by the most
important artists in
history flown in from
all over the world
for it!

clik

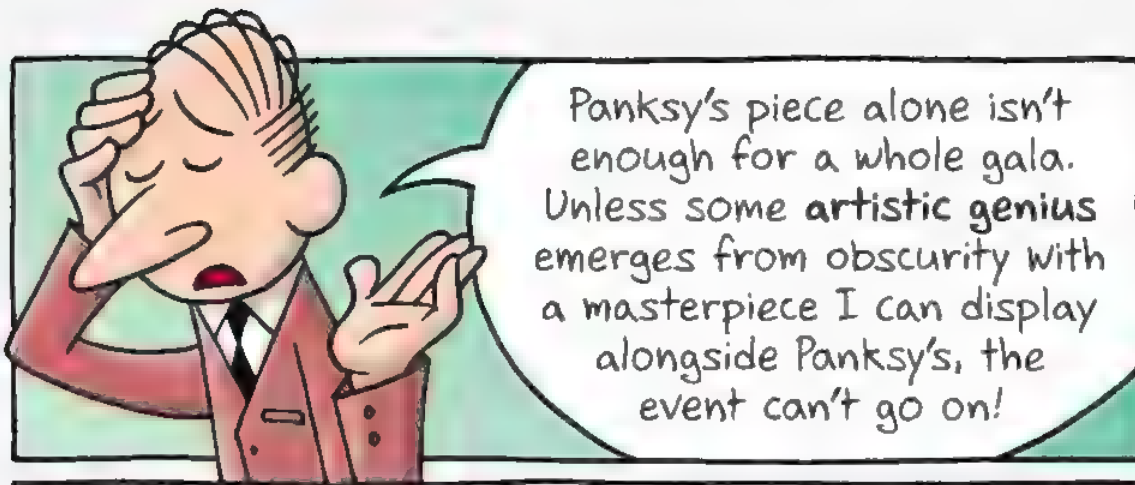
Leodoggo da Vinky! Vincent van Gopher! Frida Jello!
Pablo Pigasso! Edvard Munchies! Jackson Mollusk!
Mary Cassettedeck! Bob Ross! And many more!

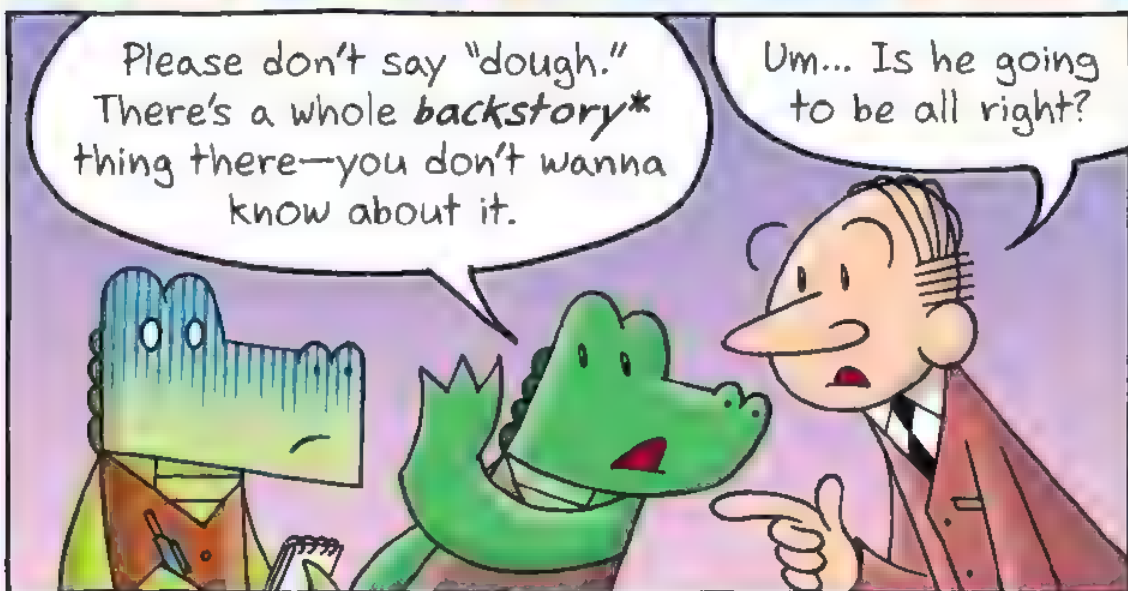






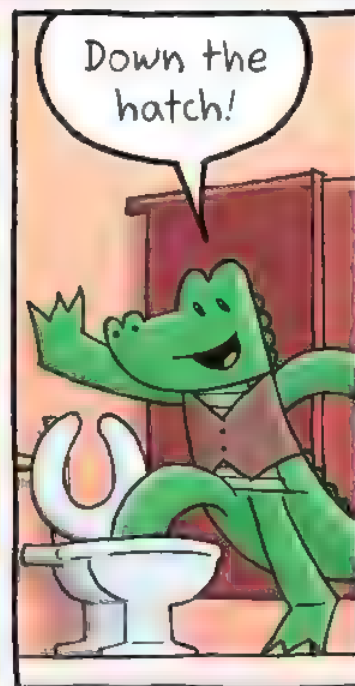




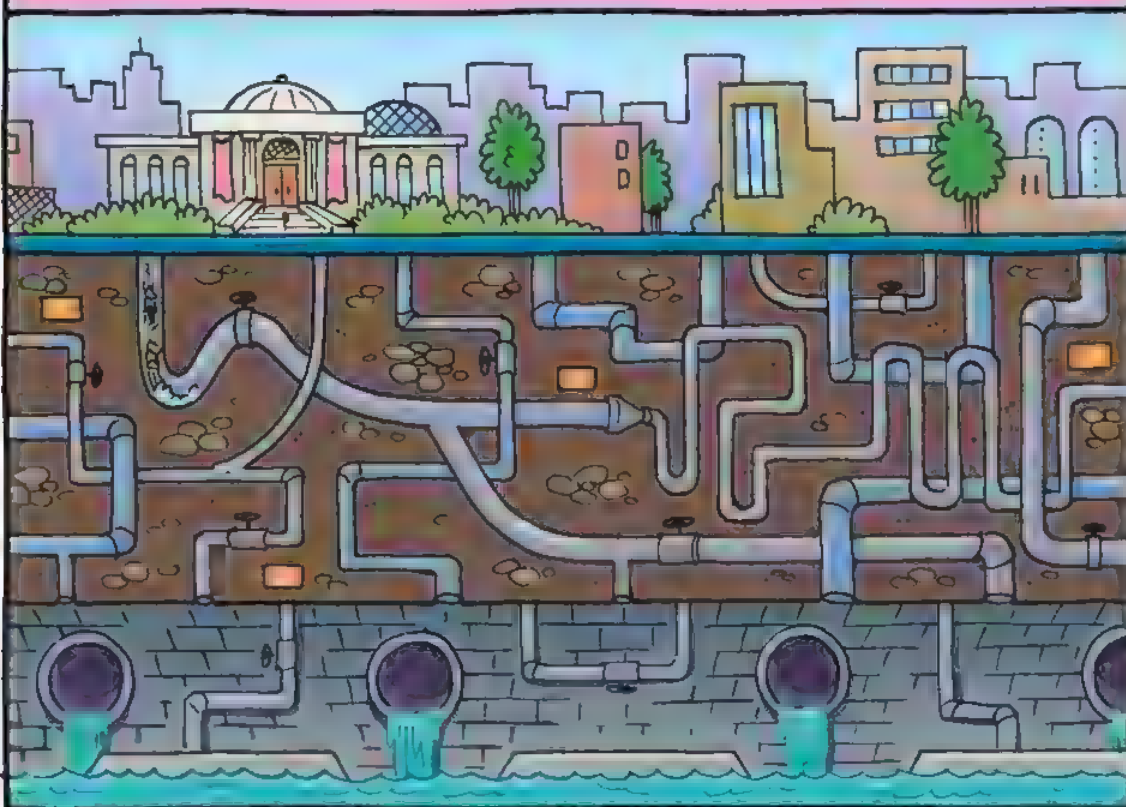


*See **InvestiGators** books 1-5!





InvestiGators, in pipes underground!



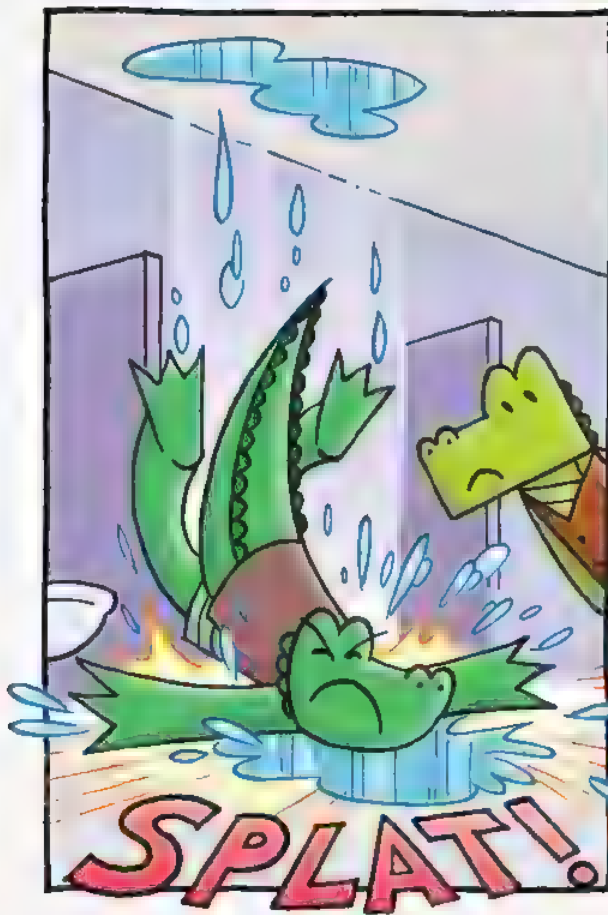
It's the fastest way to get across town!



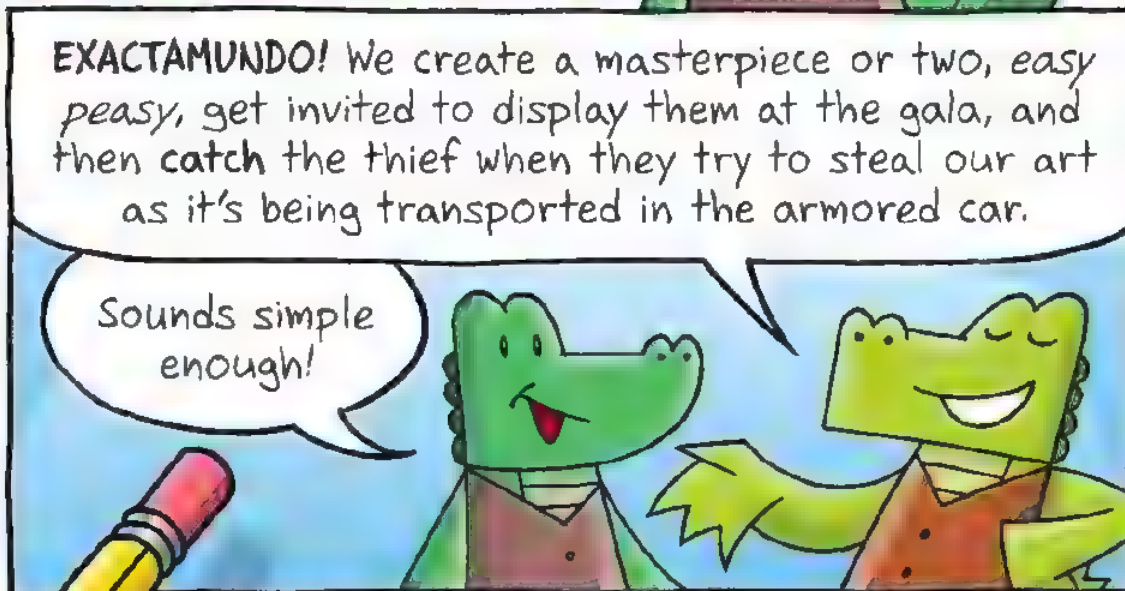


Below the city, in S.U.I.T.'s secret headquarters...





Chapter 4





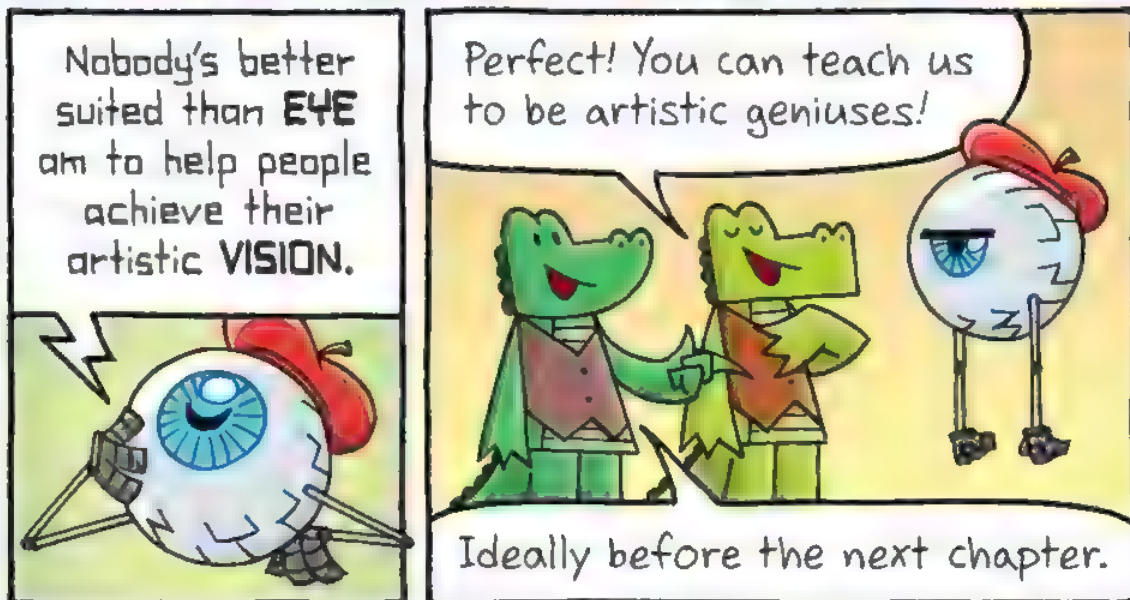
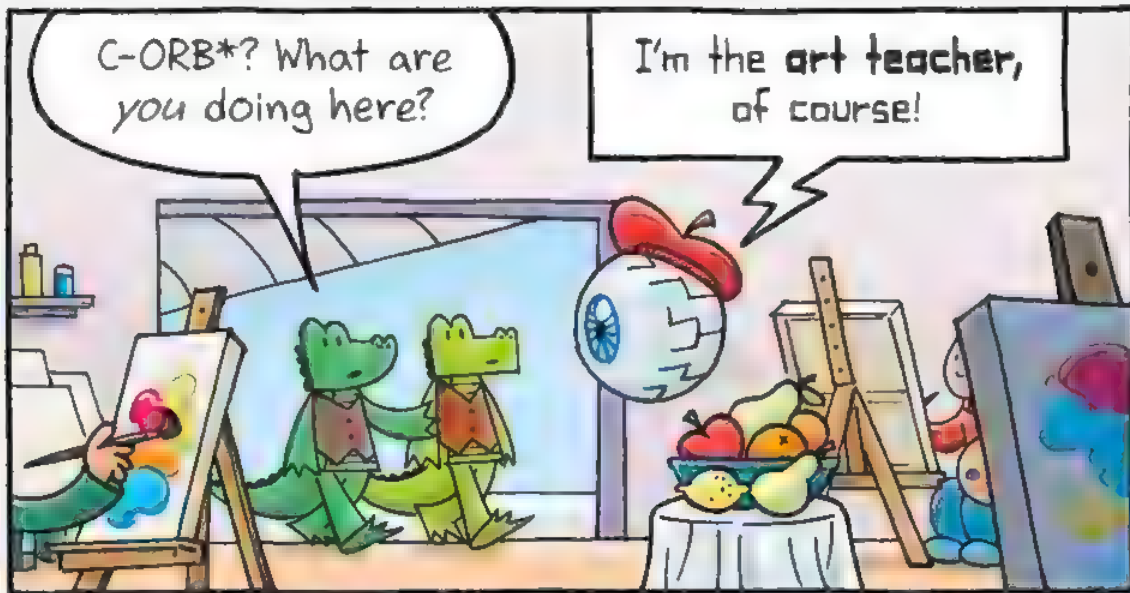
For this to work, Brash, we'll need **FOOLPROOF** undercover disguises. Let's head to **A.R.M.S.**

◀ Apparel
Research and
Manufacturing
Section



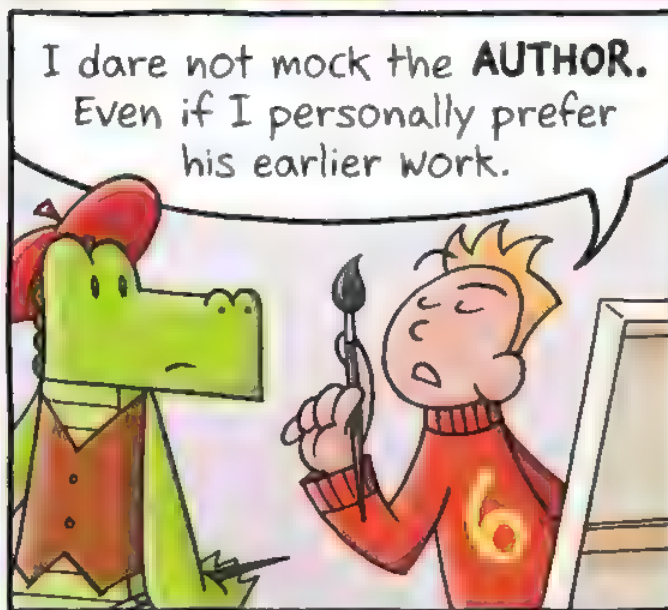
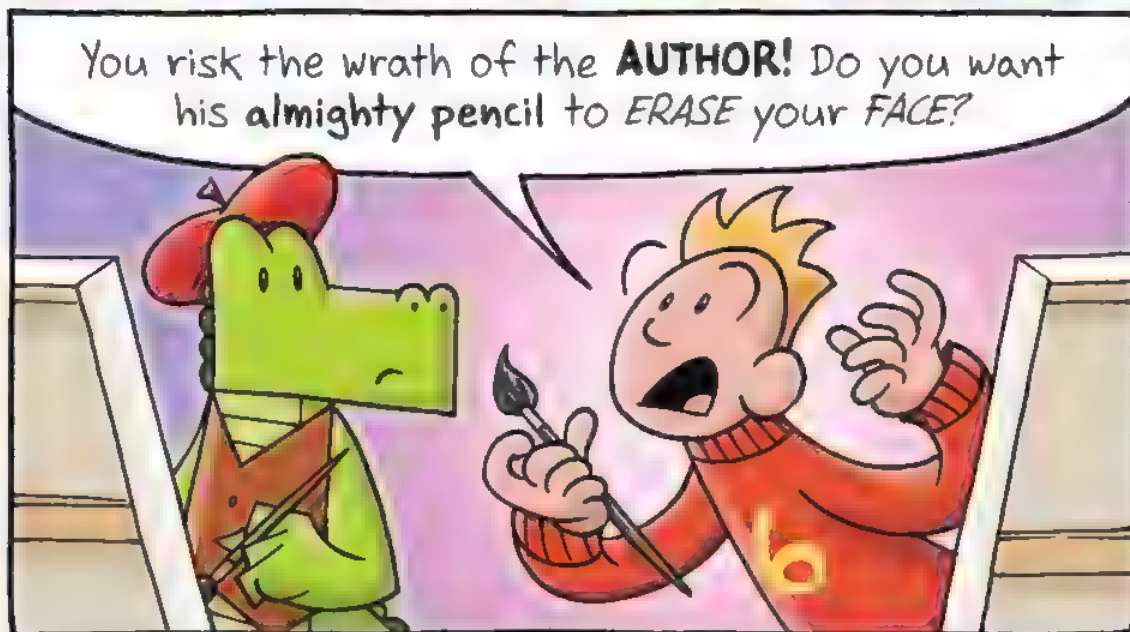
We don't just need new *disguises*, Mango. We need new *SKILLS*! We're heading to **A.R.T.S.!**





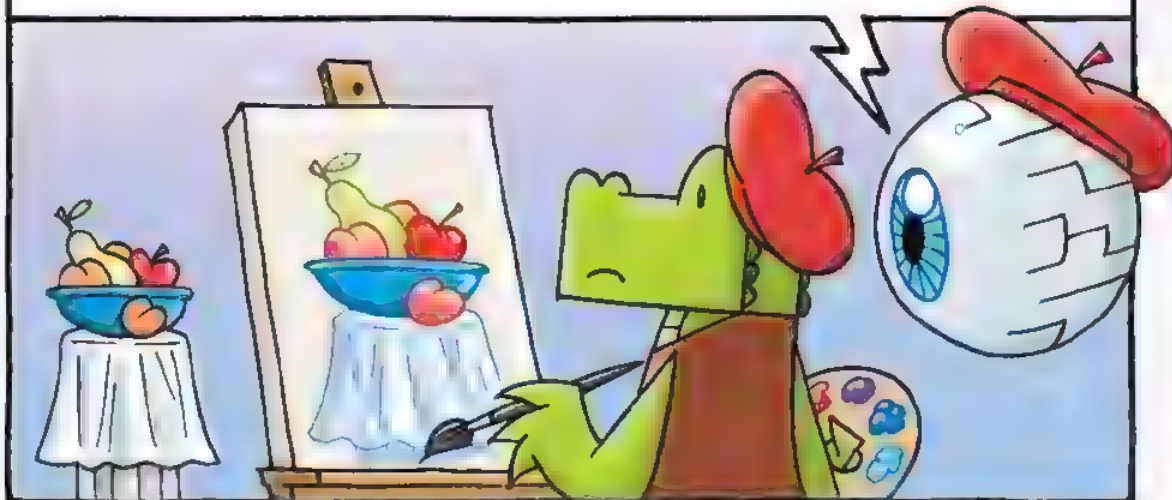
*Computerized Ocular Remote Butler



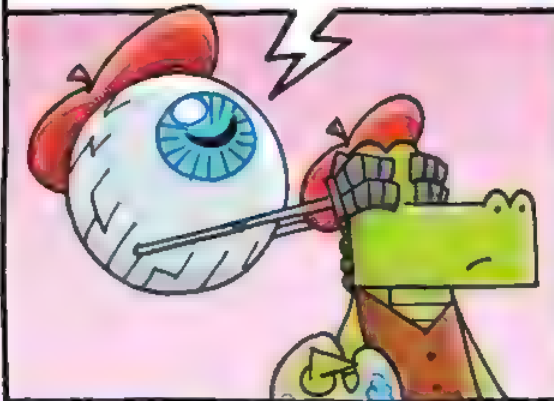




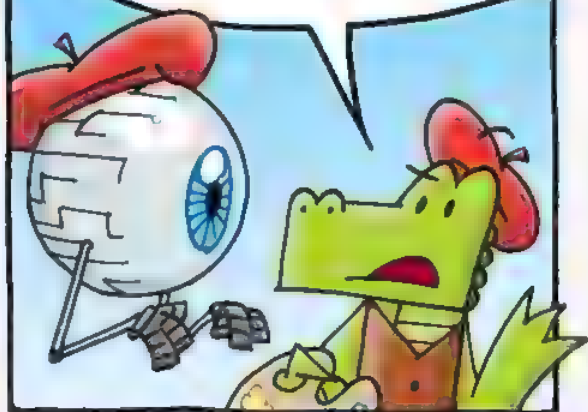
It's very...accurate. Literal. Realistic. But not something one might call *eye-catching*. It doesn't...**SAY** anything.



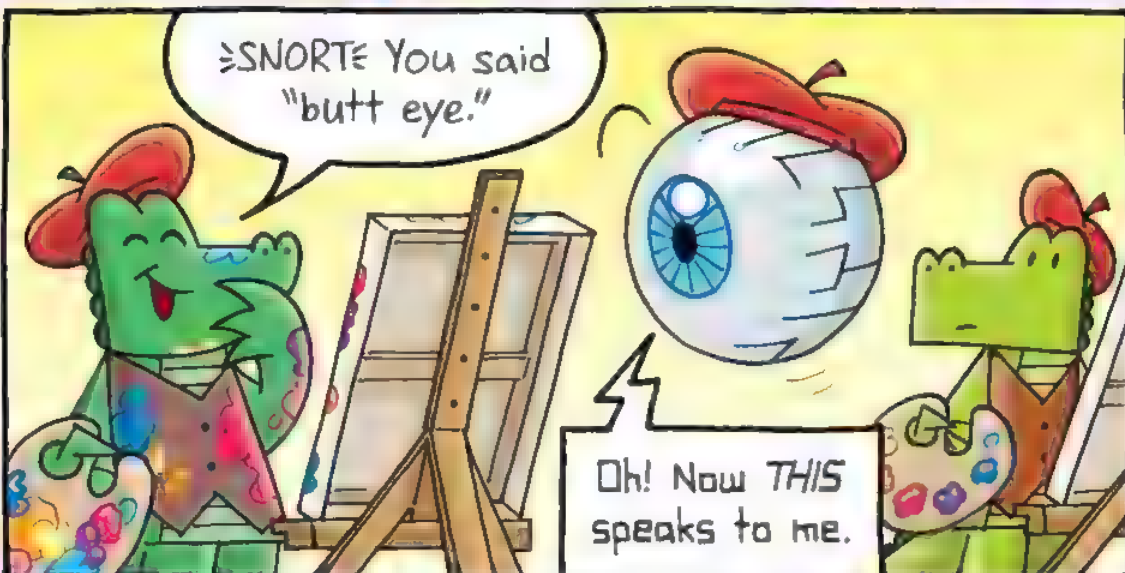
Don't just paint what you SEE. You must look with your **INNER EYE**.



That's easy for *YOU* to say. You're nothing **BUT** eye!

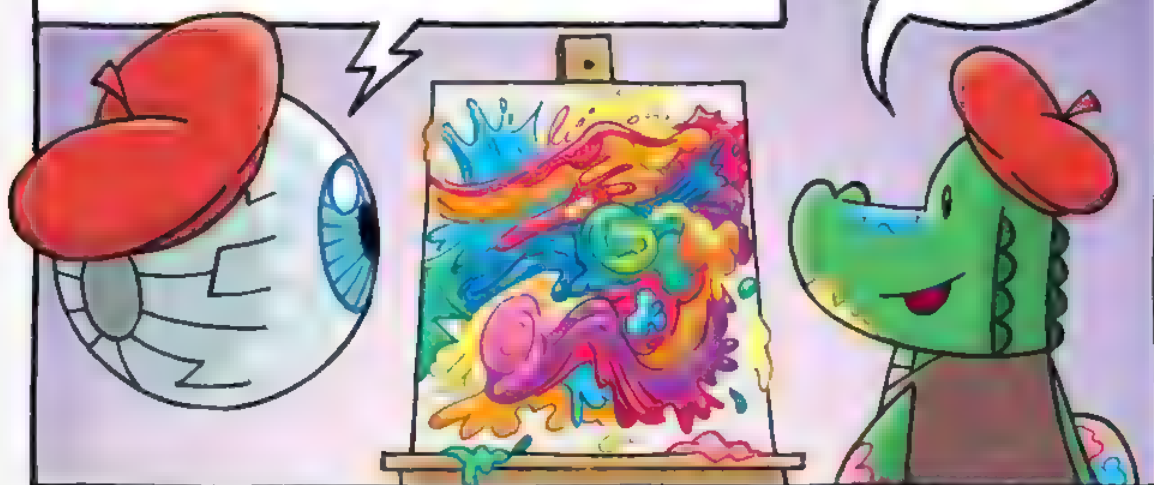


≡SNORTE You said "butt eye."



Oh! Now *THIS* speaks to me.

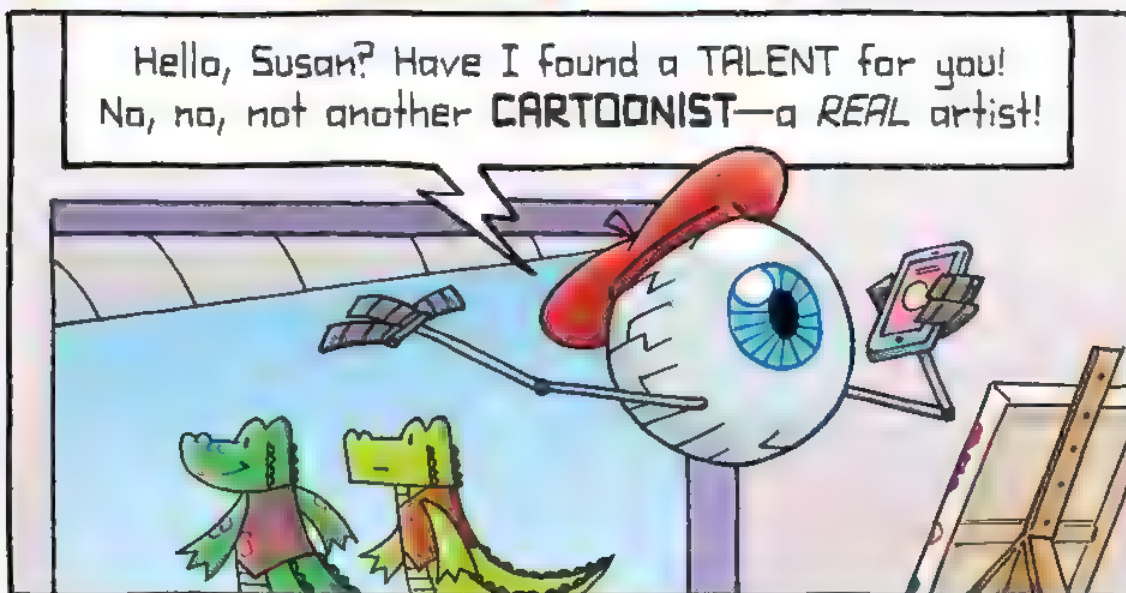
It's so daring... So **RAW**. So full of **EMOTION!** *A TRUE MASTERPIECE!*



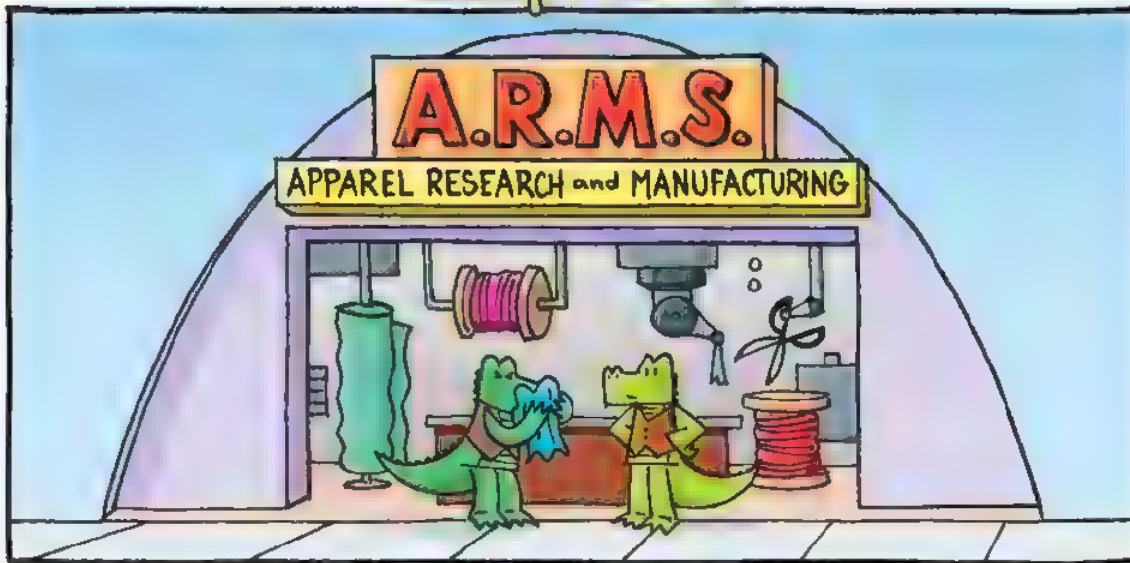
You really think so?







Chapter 5



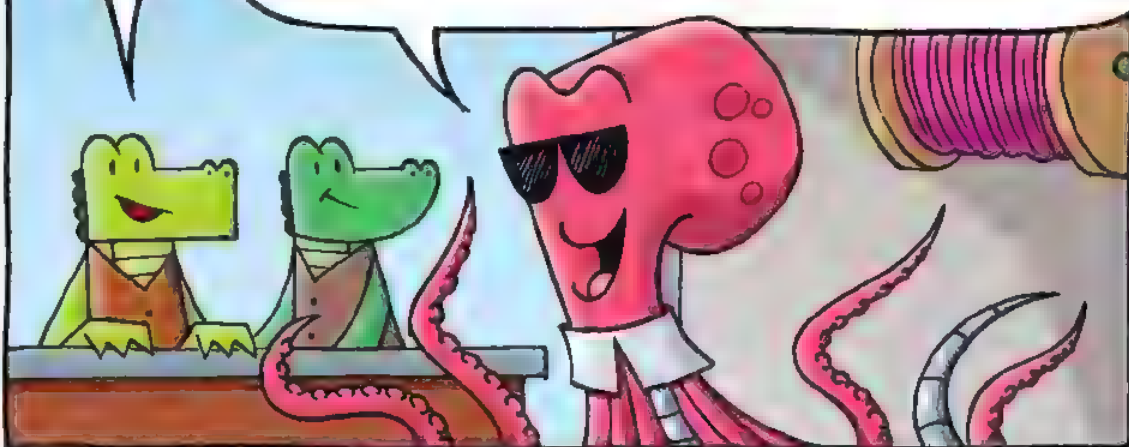
Sven is taking longer than usual.
Your disguise must be some Very
COMPLICATED Spy Technology!

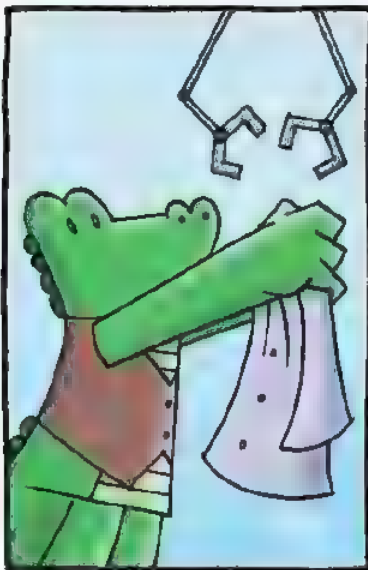
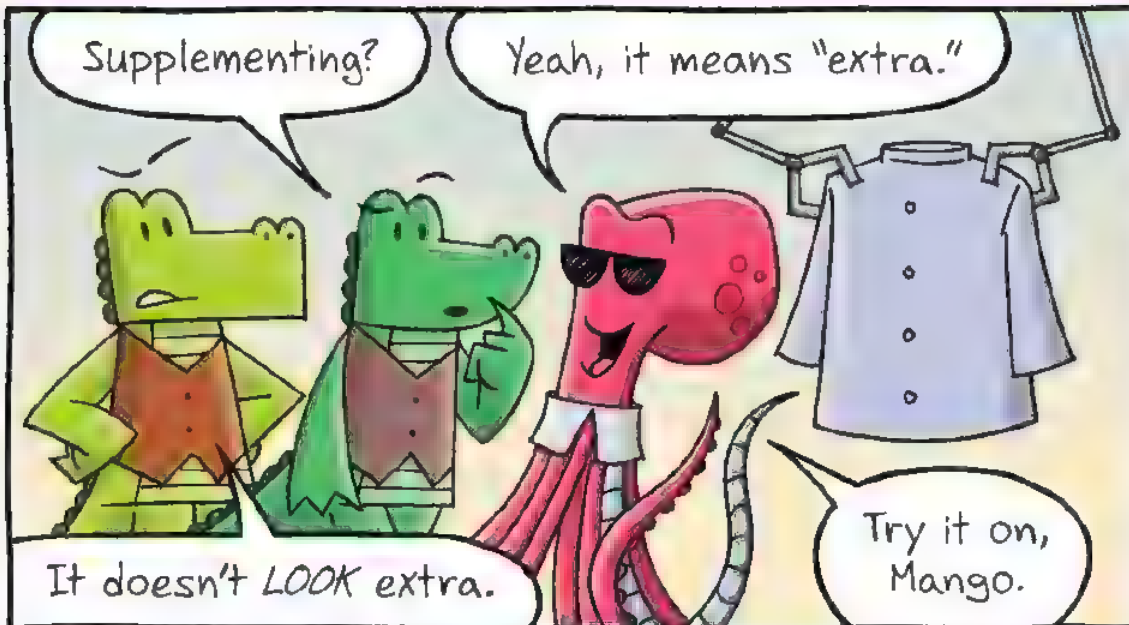
V.C.S.T.? Doesn't
exactly roll off
the tongue.

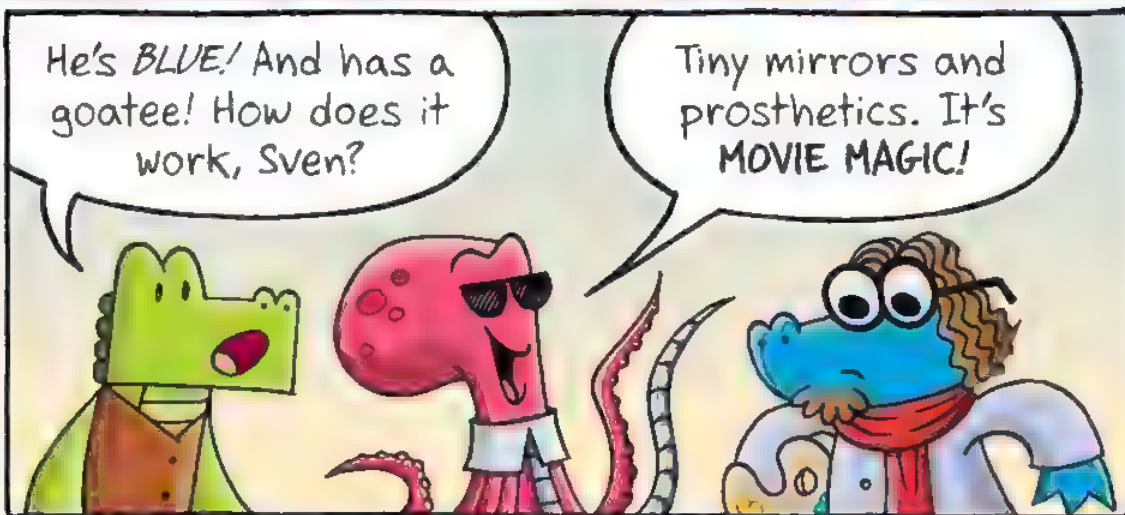


Ah,
Sven!

Sorry for the wait, Gators. Due to the
unique requirements for Mango's disguise,
instead of a V.E.S.T., I've come up with...







But...this is a comic book.

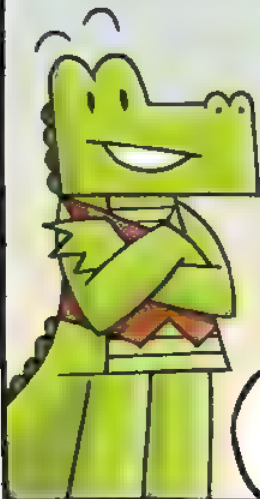
Fine, it's COMIC BOOK MAGIC!



I feel like this case isn't simply black-and-white, but more akin to the classical technique of **chiaroscuro**, in which an artist, like myself, uses strong contrasts between light and dark through subtle gradations to convey form and dimension...



WOW! Brash! I finally understand color theory... composition...three-point perspective...



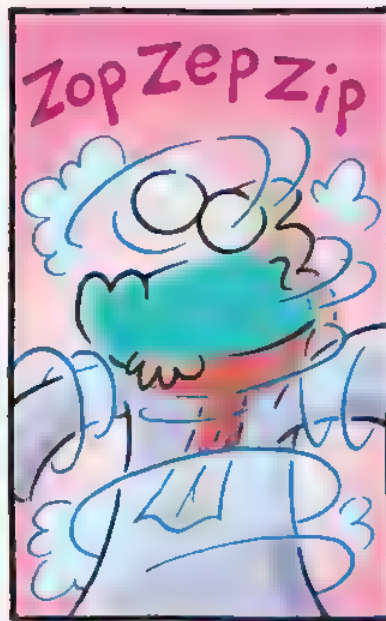
He's completely unrecognizable!

...and PAINT-BY-NUMBERS!



Well, almost unrecognizable.

The best part is, the S.M.O.C.K. itself functions like any other gadget, so it can collapse into Mango's standard V.E.S.T. along with the rest of the usual gear.



Great work, Sven. Now to introduce the fine art world to this international artist extraordinaire!

Compact!



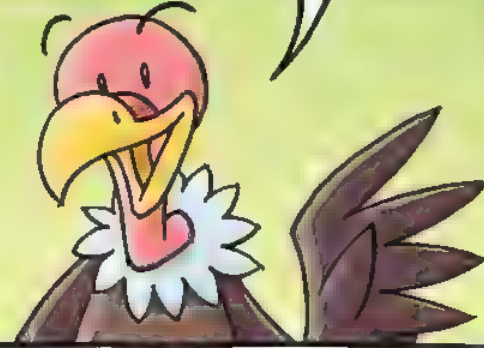
Come on, Mango!

Can we get lunch first? I'm a STARVING ARTIST!





A previously unknown artistic genius has just emerged in the art world. SO unknown that I didn't even ask his name before booking this exclusive remote interview!



Greetings, Vohnda. My name is MA—

»PST!«

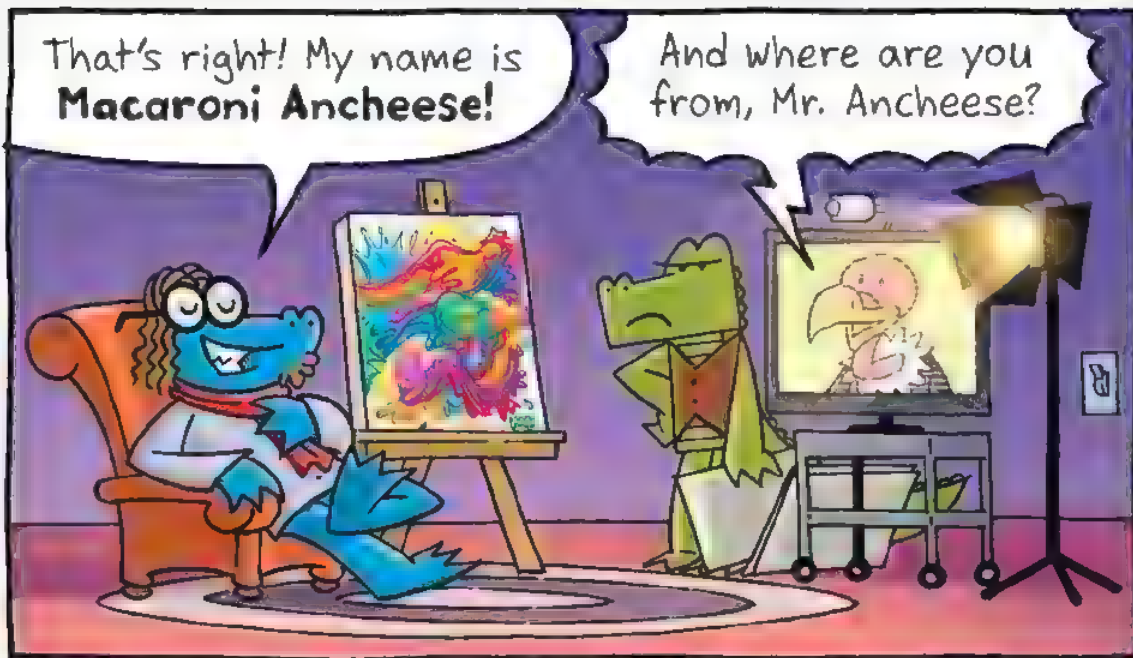


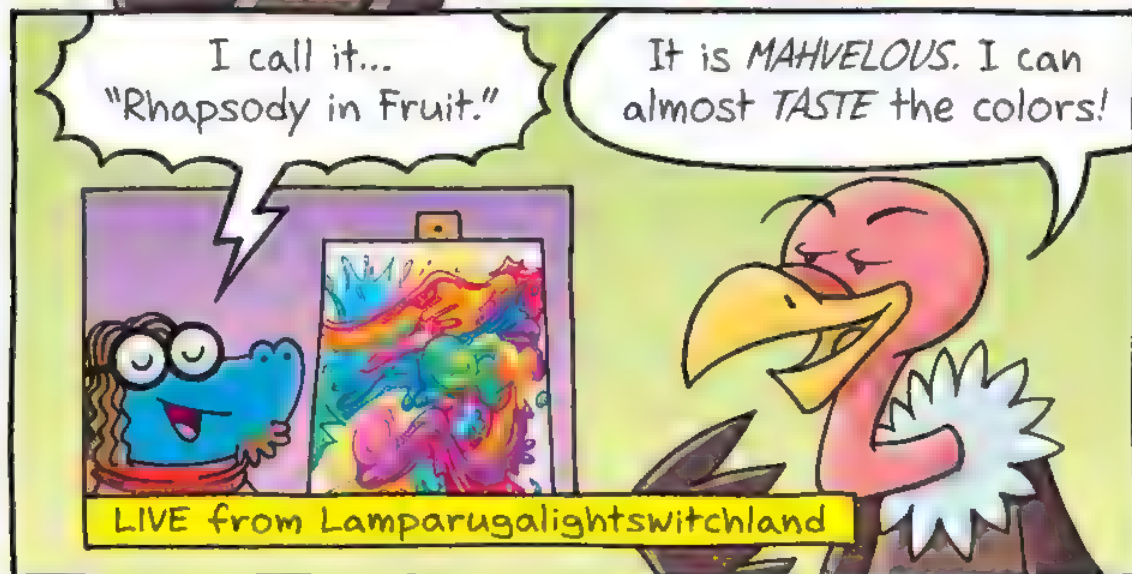
—AAAAAcaroni...

Macaroni what?



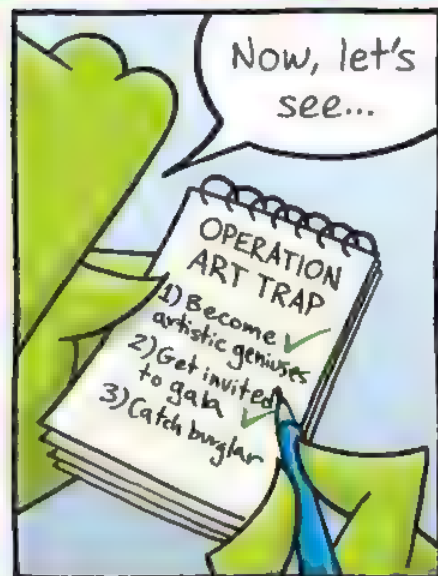
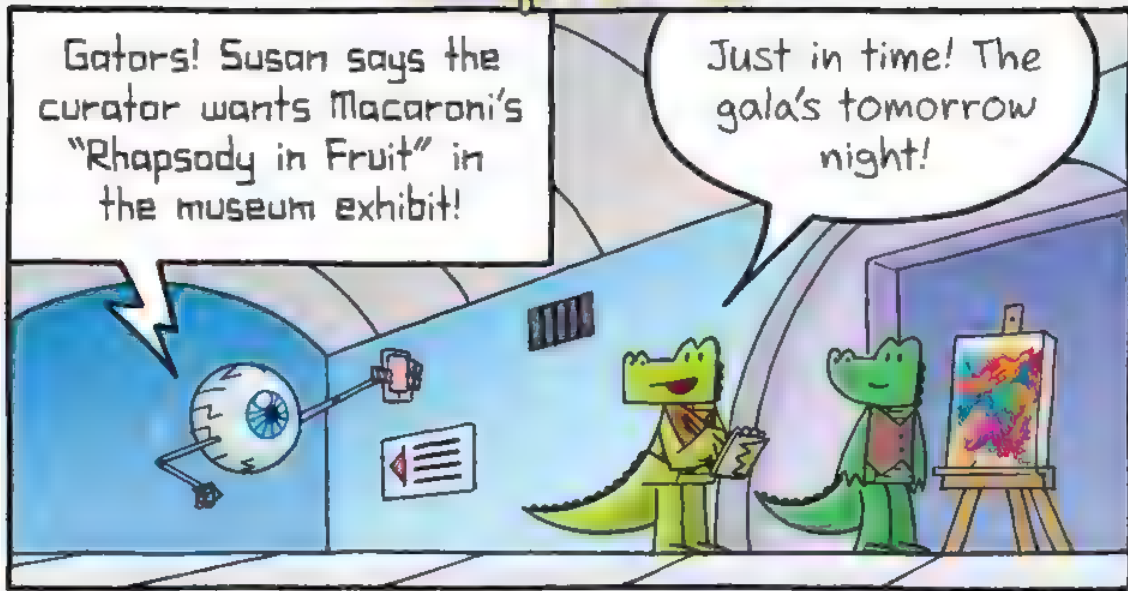
Macaroniiiiii...aaaaaan' cheese?







Chapter 6



Perfect! We're on the last step to solve this case and we're not even halfway through the book!

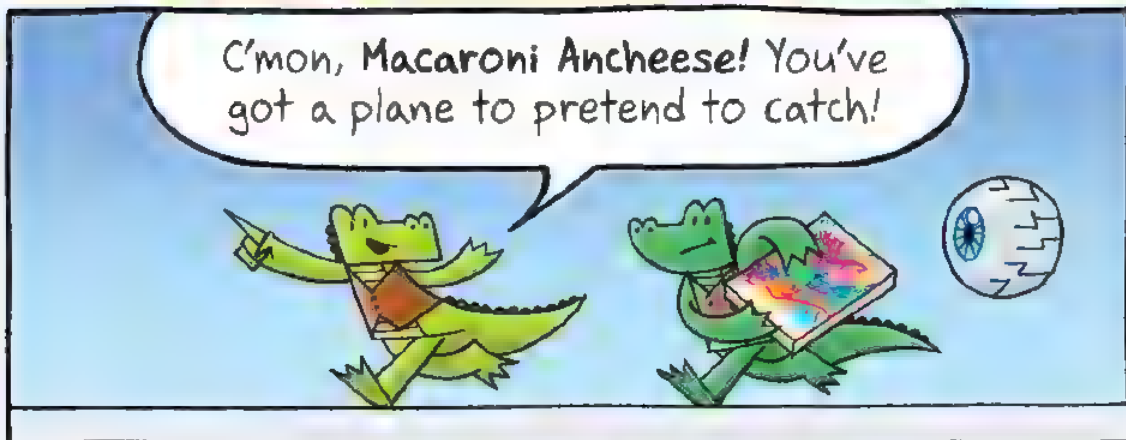
Maybe this time there'll even be room for a "How to Draw" section.

What are you doing, Mango?

I'm calibrating this **tracking device** to detect wherever my painting is.

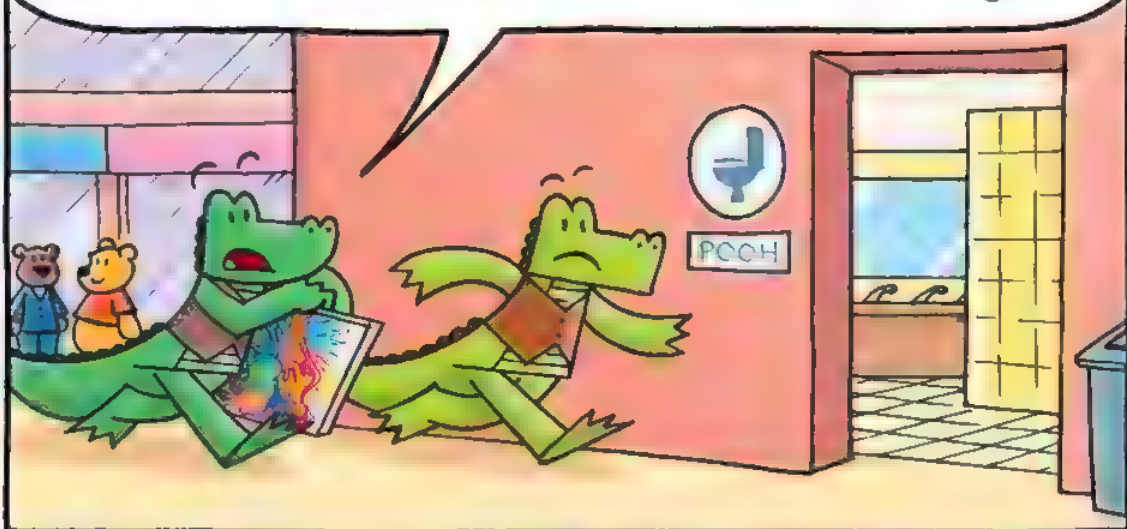
If we catch the thief in the act of stealing *THIS* painting, they still might not reveal *WHERE* they've hidden the *OTHER* paintings they've stolen.

Hmm, good point.





It's a good thing we showed up four hours early,
like the TSA recommends for international flights.

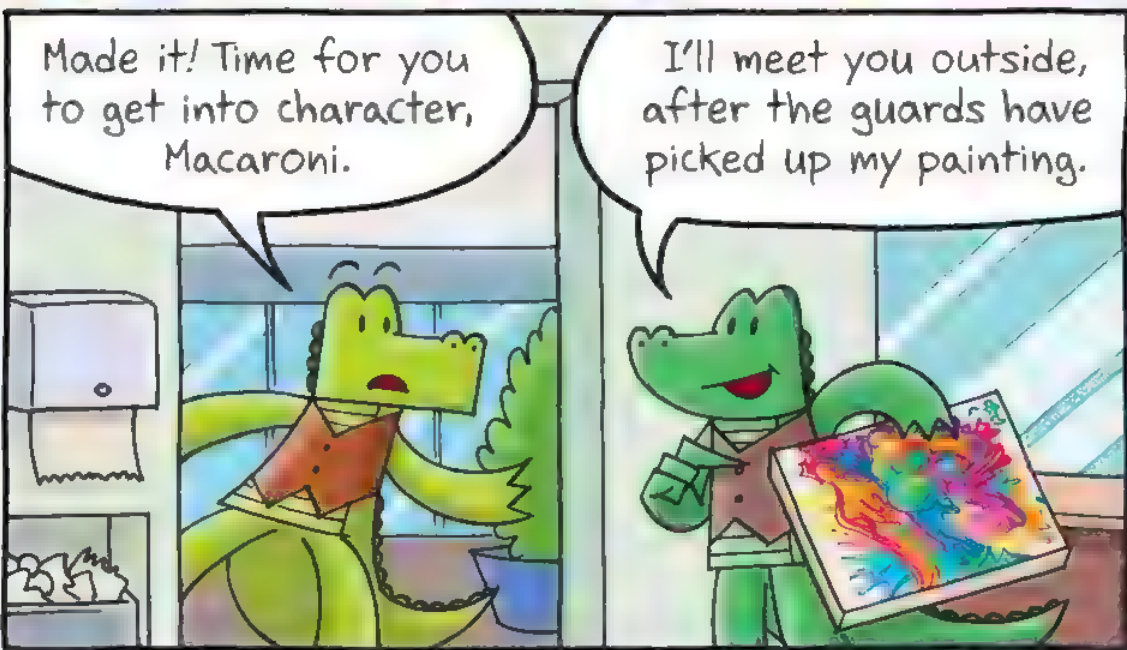


At the ACTUAL airport...



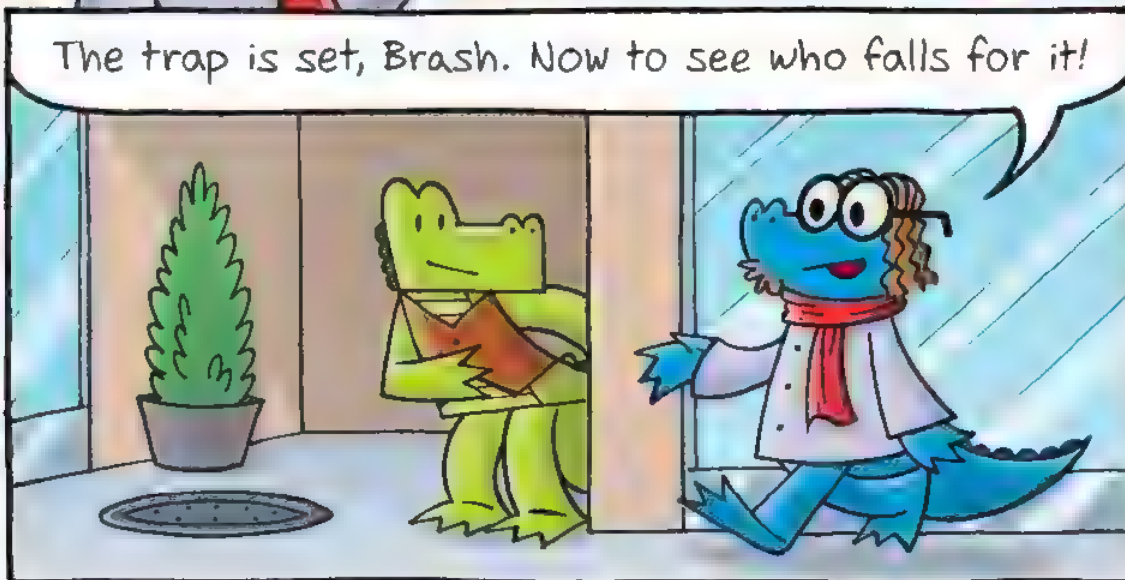
Made it! Time for you
to get into character,
Macaroni.

I'll meet you outside,
after the guards have
picked up my painting.

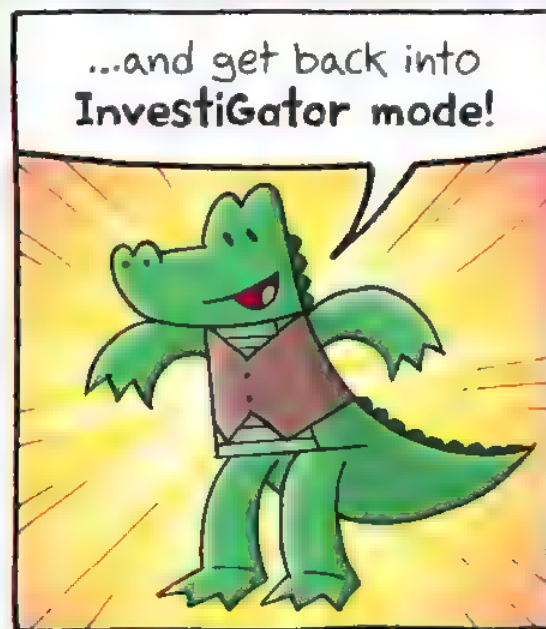


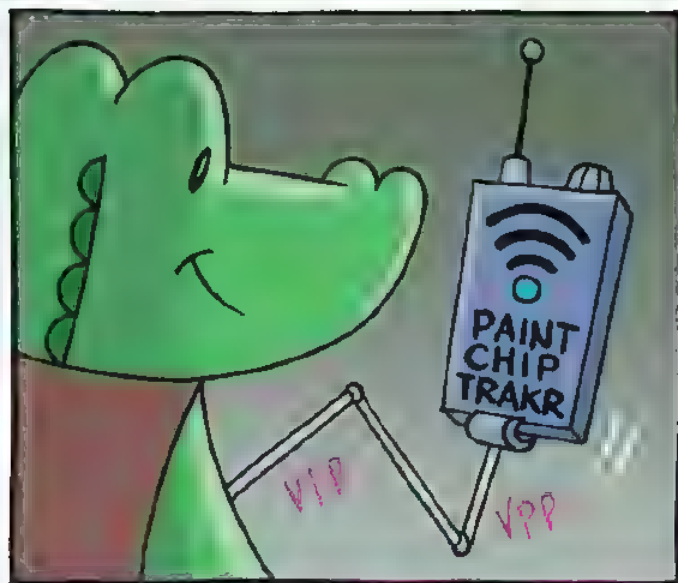


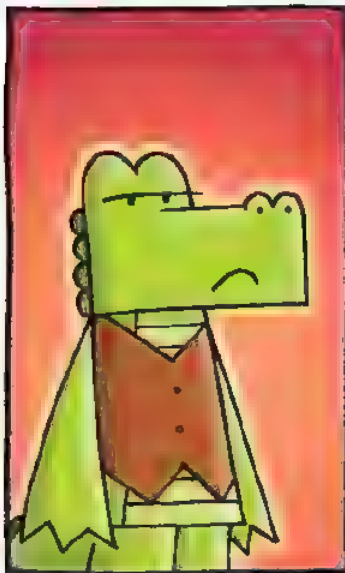
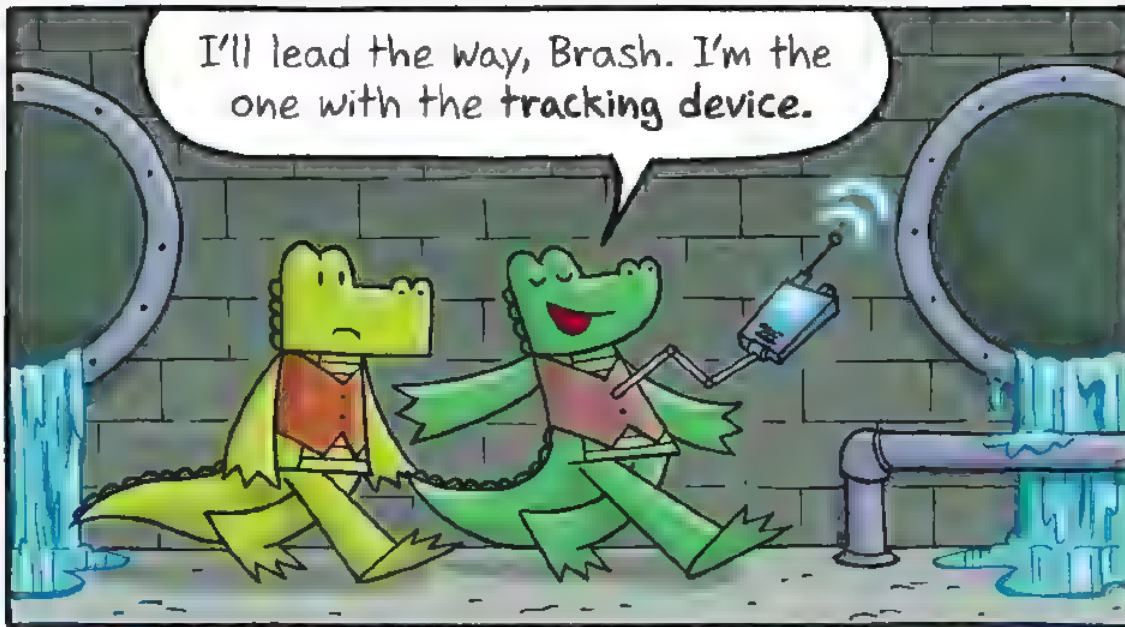


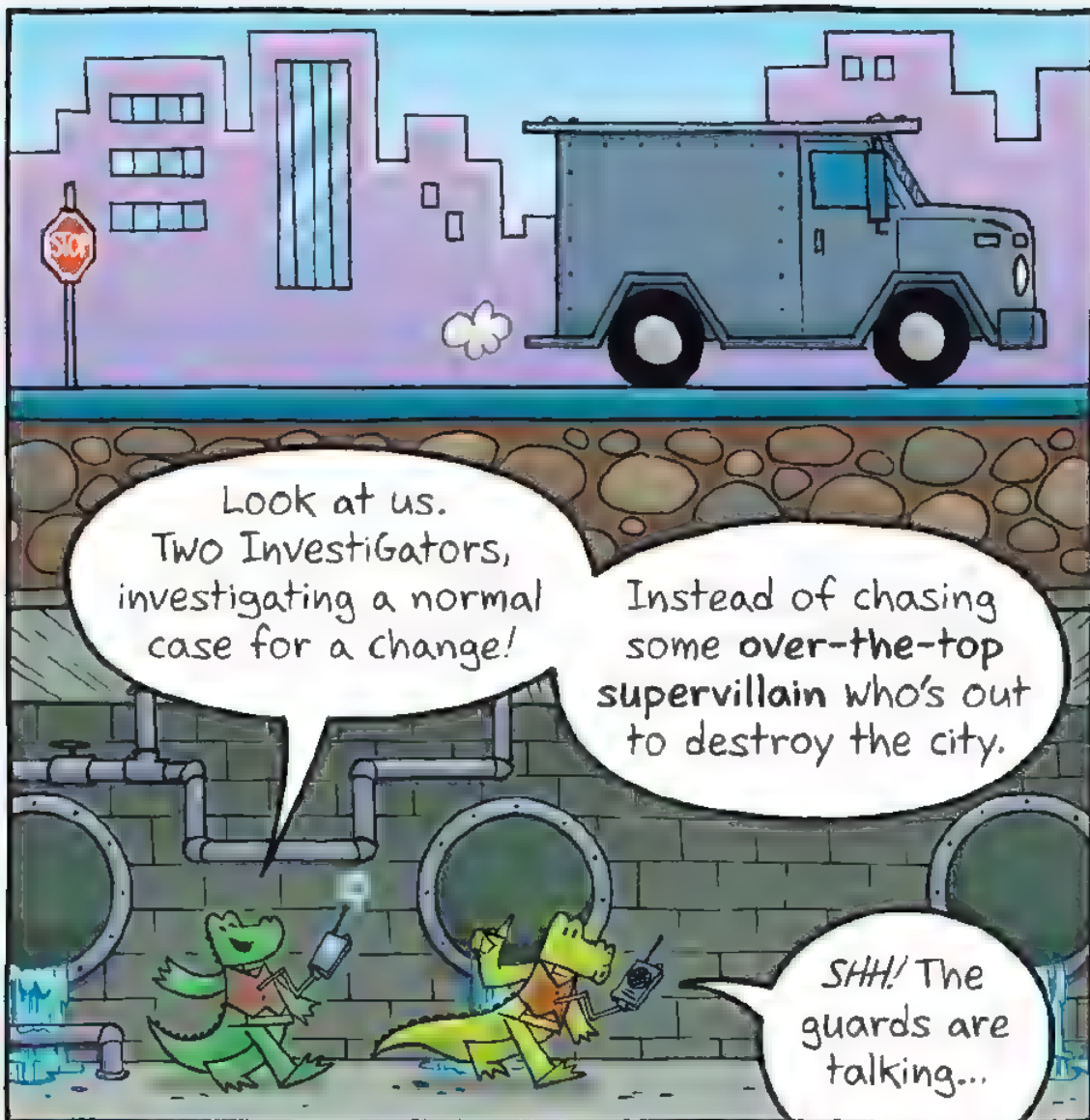


Zep
Zop
Zip





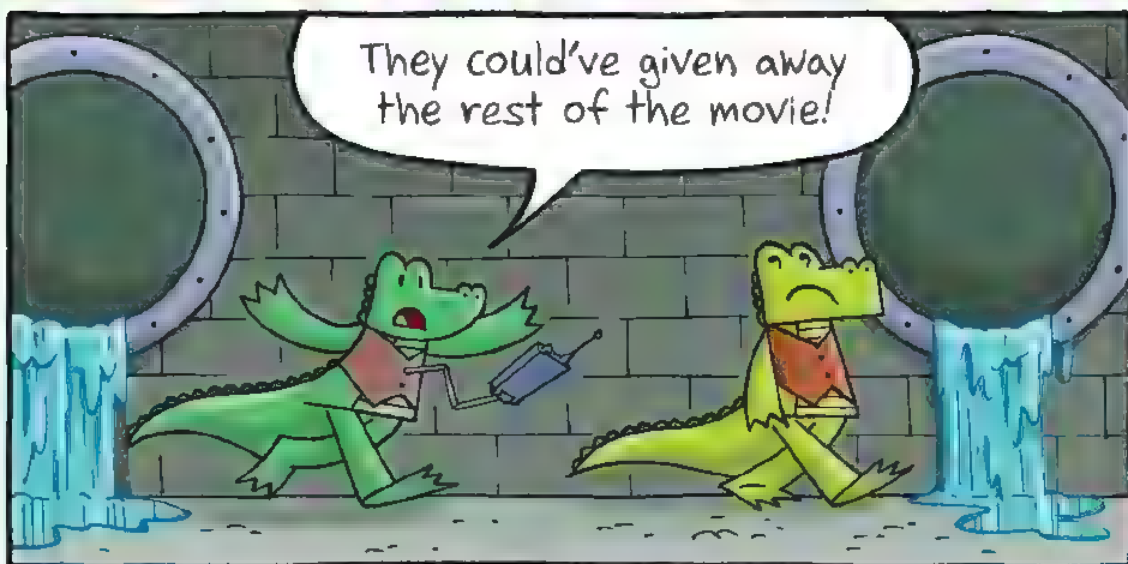




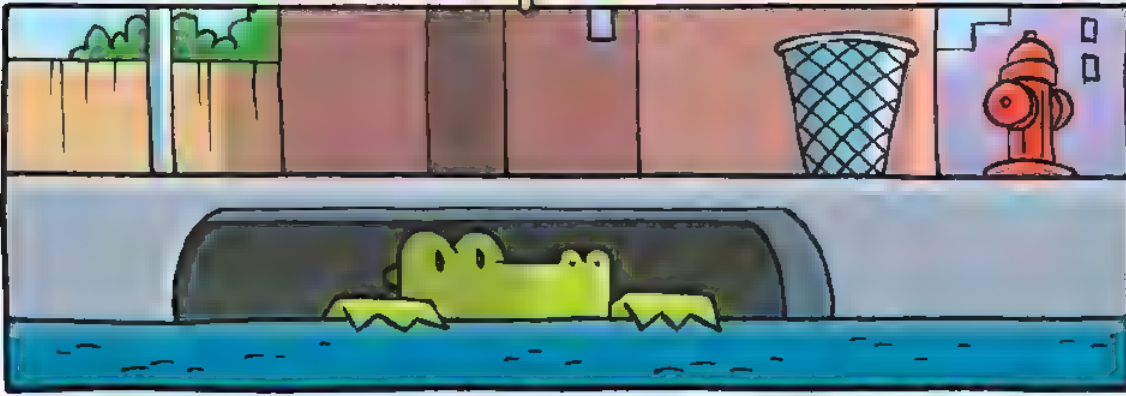
...and the whole plan all along is to DESTROY THE CITY!







Chapter 7



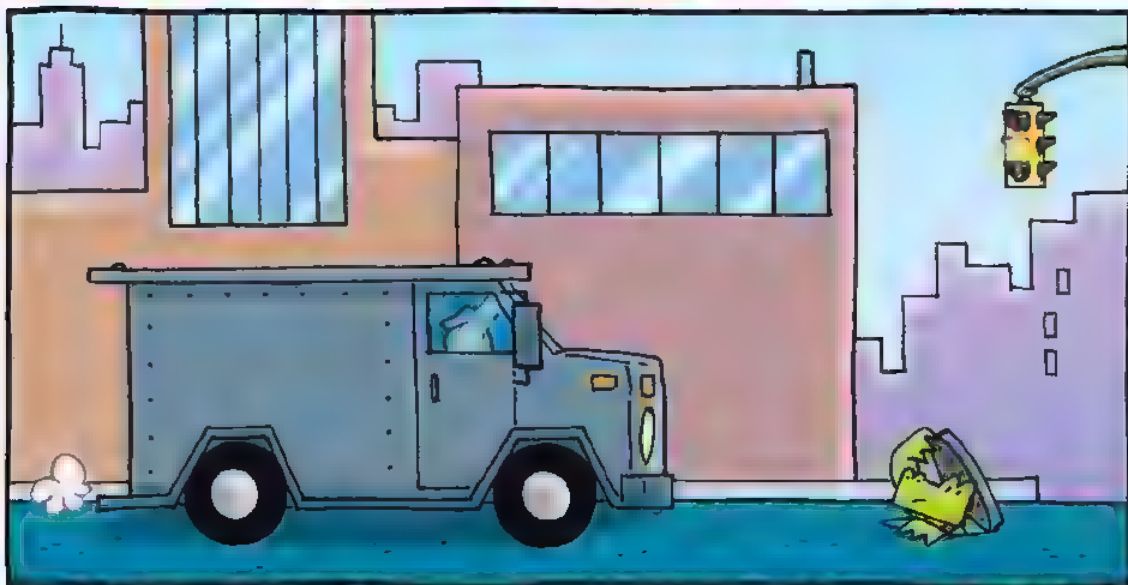
The armored car is about a block away.



It's still heading toward the museum. Is your canvas still in the back?

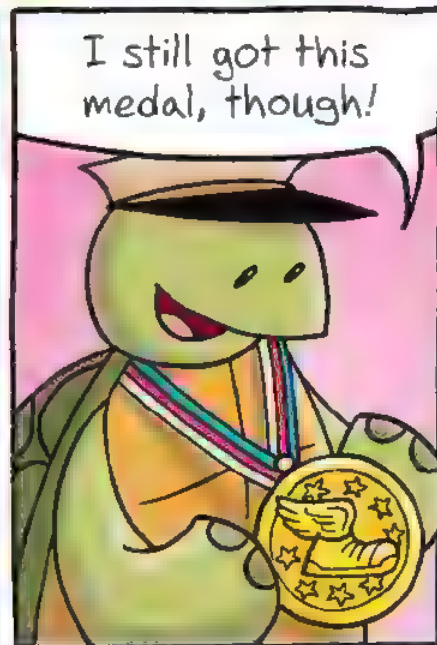
As far as I can tell.

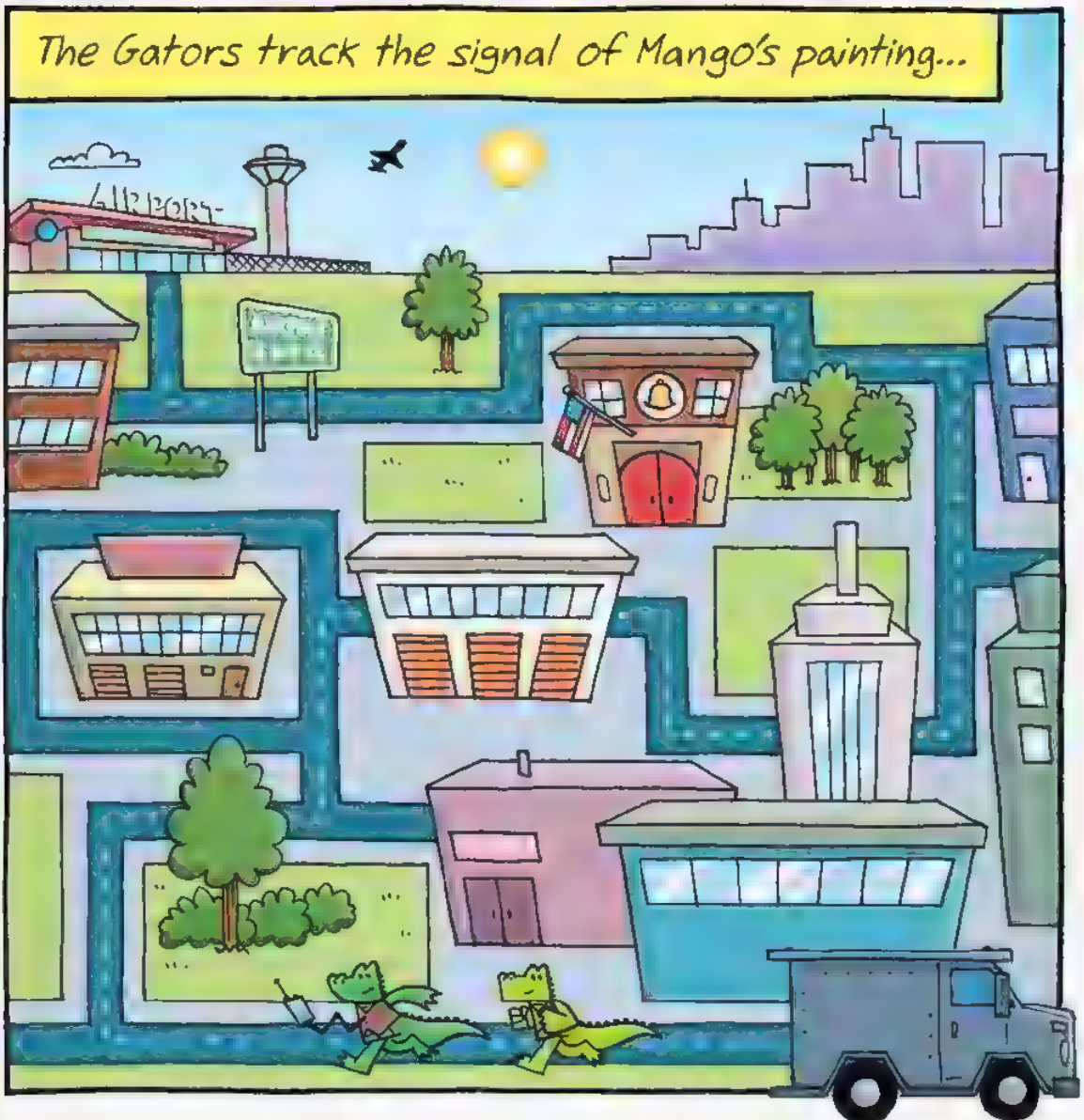




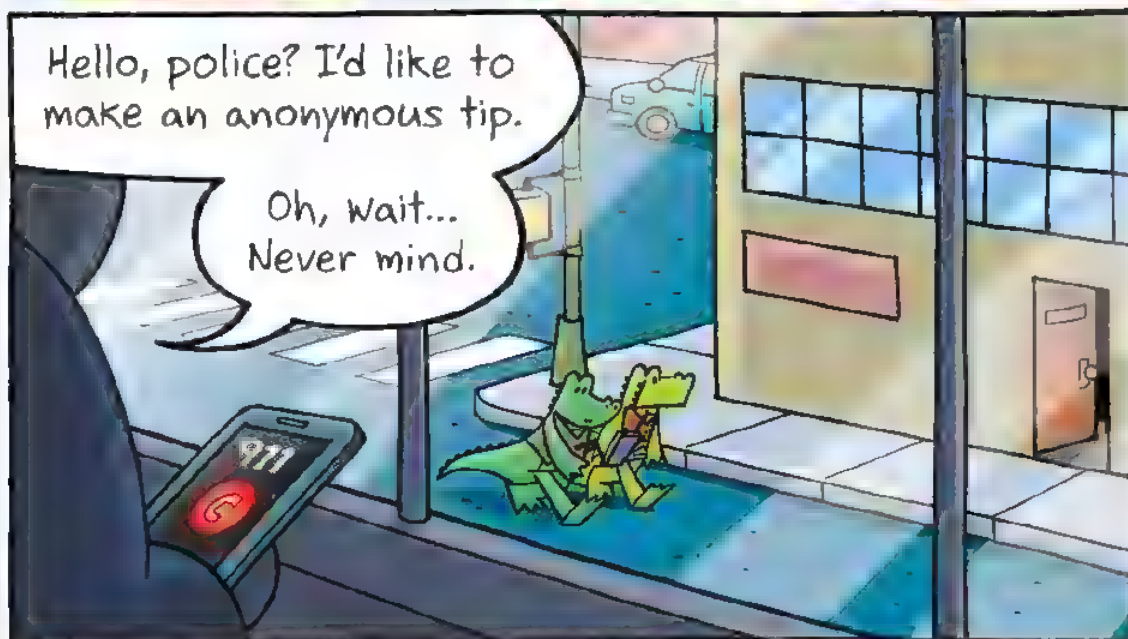




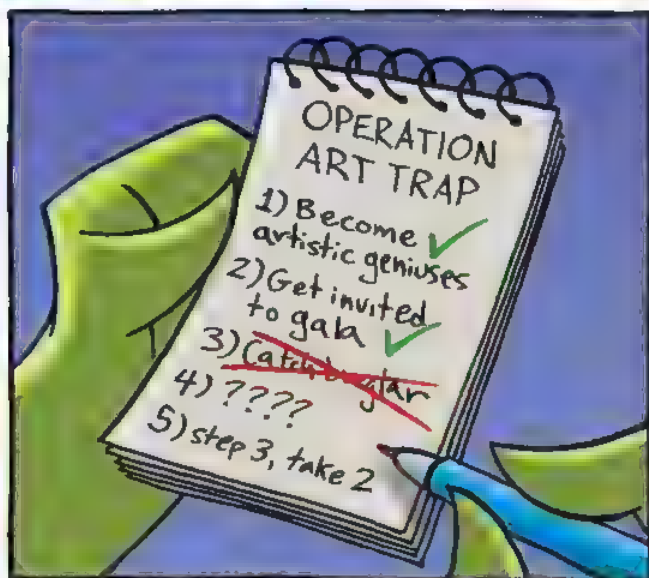












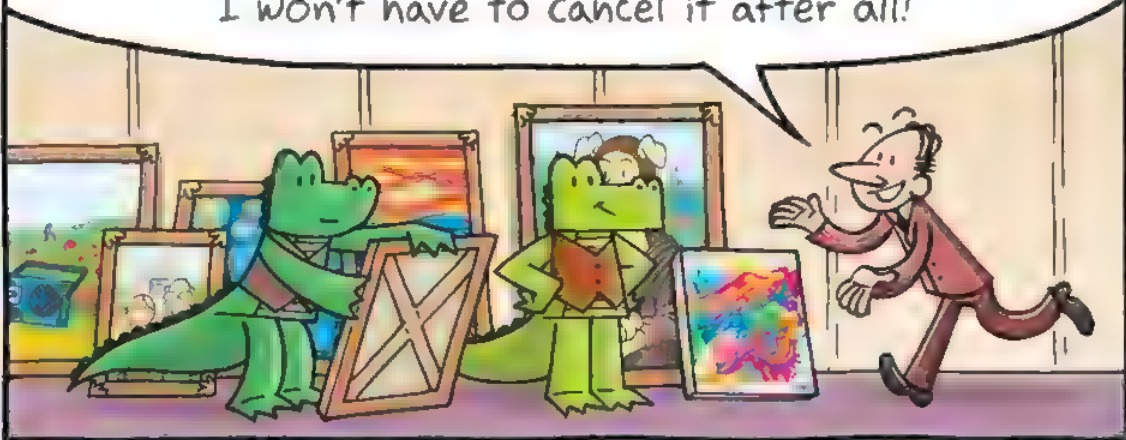


Chapter 8

At the CORRECT museum...



When T and P returned with yet another empty armored car, I feared the worst. But you've found all the missing paintings, just in time for the gala! I won't have to cancel it after all!



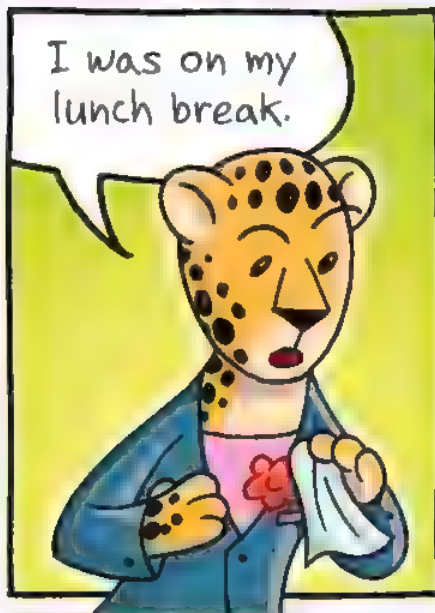
We would've been here sooner, but we went to the UDDER museum.



We HERD they had an impressive CATTLE-log. It was quite MOO-ving.



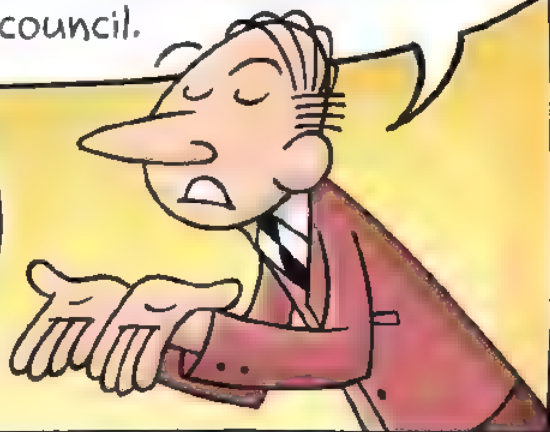






Only the brightest minds, most famous celebrities, richest moguls, and most prominent influencers are invited! And of course those clowns from the city council.

As grateful as the museum is that you found the art, your services are no longer required.



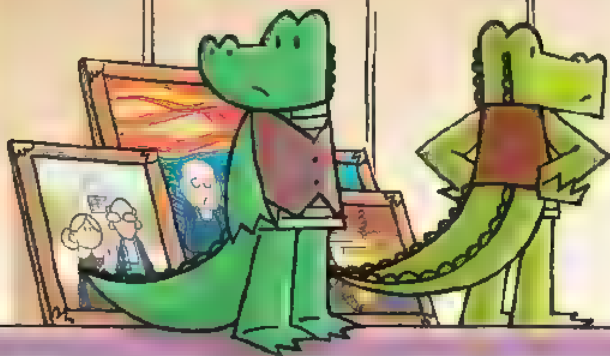
And what about the thief?

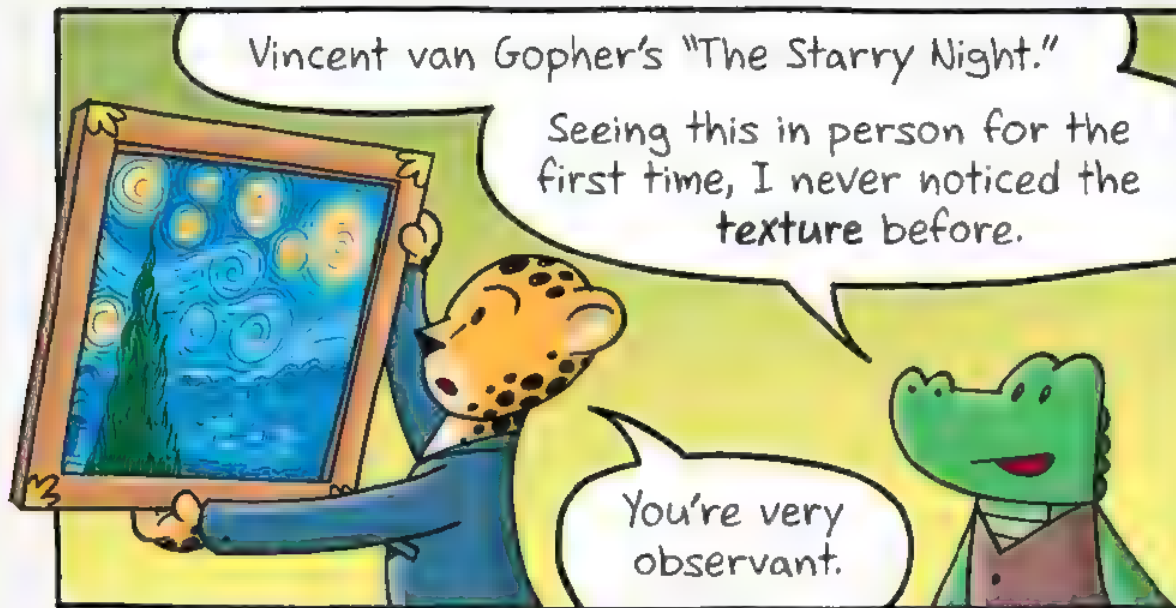
Well, they're not invited, either, obviously!

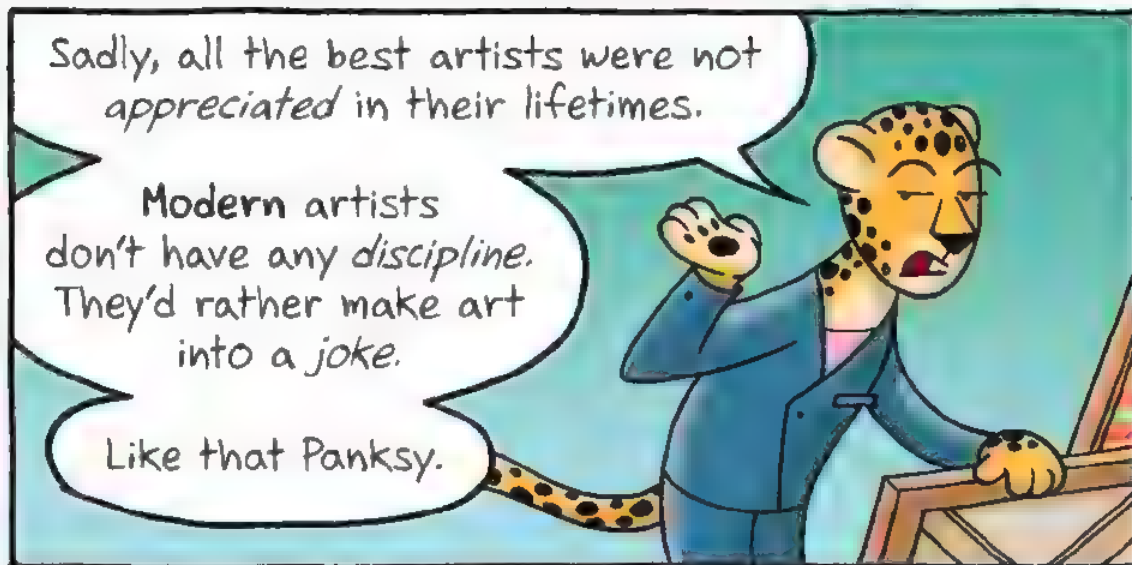


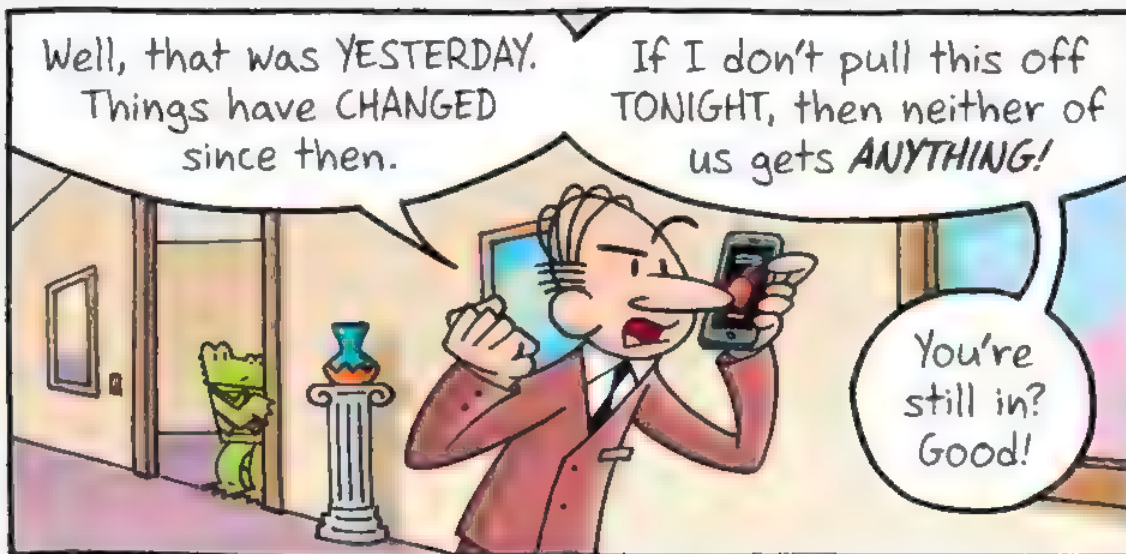
Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a lot of work to do.

People don't just come to the museum for the VIEW, you know.













Chapter 9



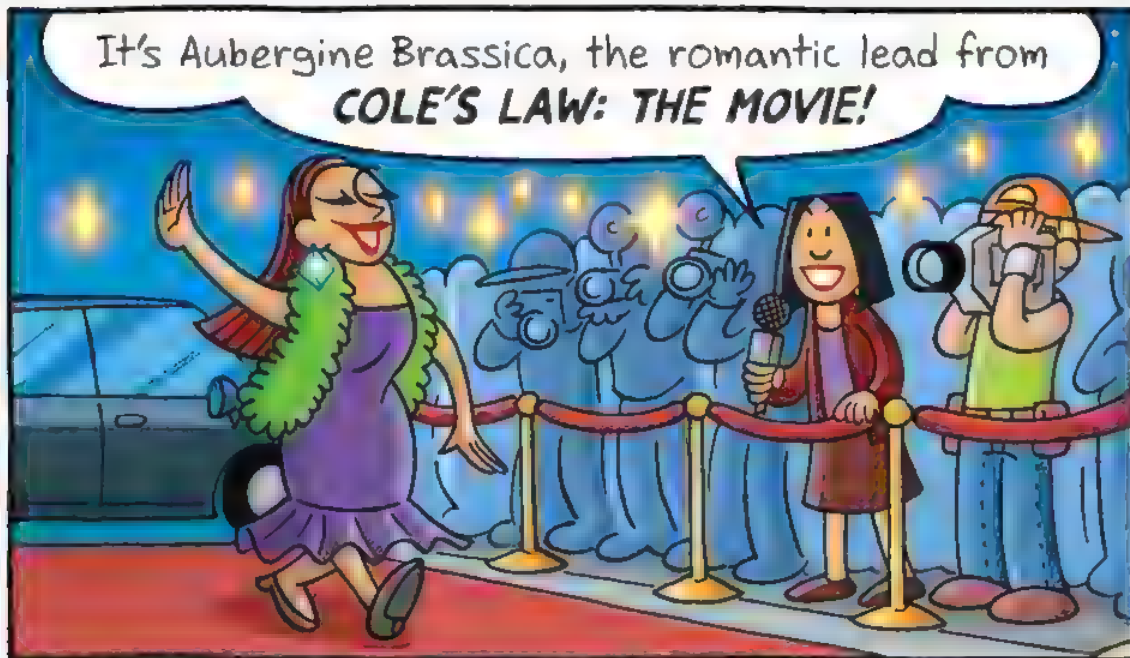
This is Cici Boringstories with *Action News Now*, reporting LIVE from outside the city Art Museum Gala! I'm filling in for Vohnda, the Culture Vulture, who's out sick with avian flu.

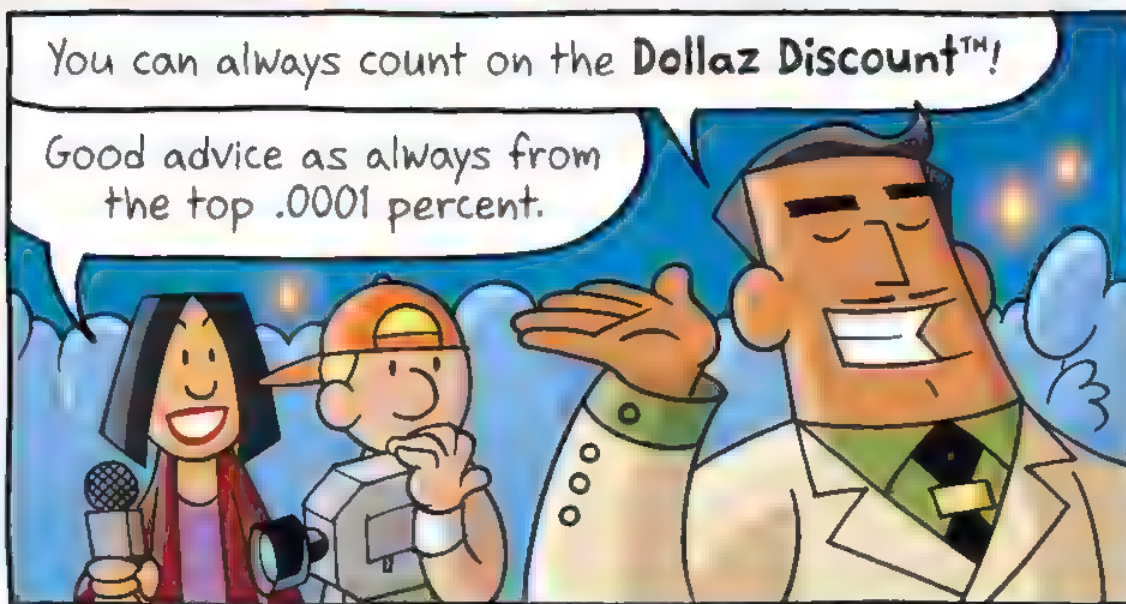
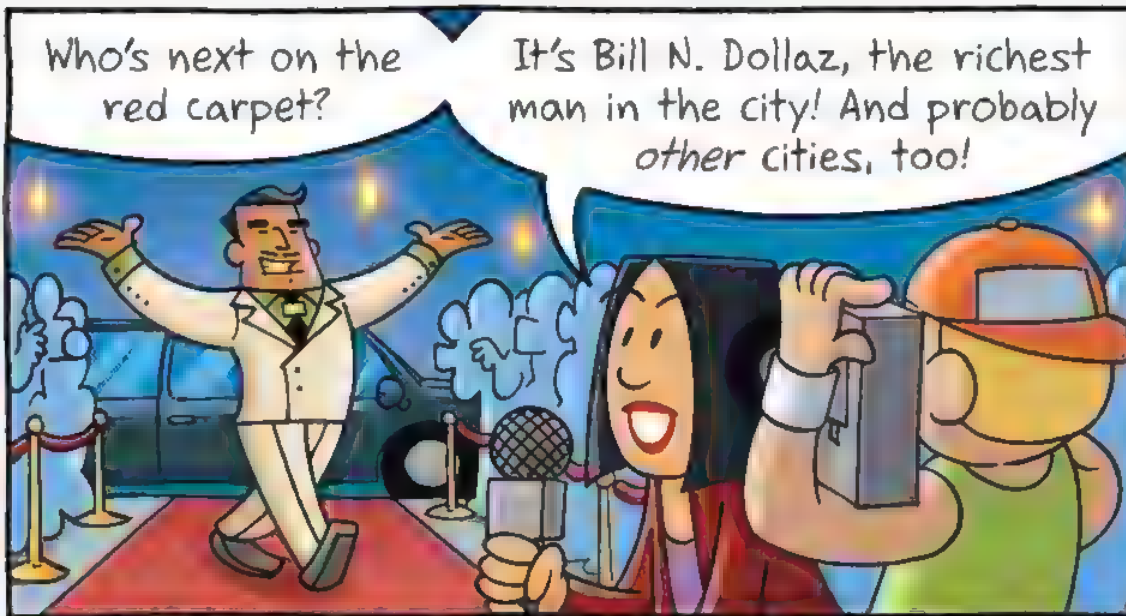


I don't care much for boring old art, but I'll never pass up an opportunity for celebrity gawking. Catching a glimpse of a famous face is quite a competition amongst the paparazzi!

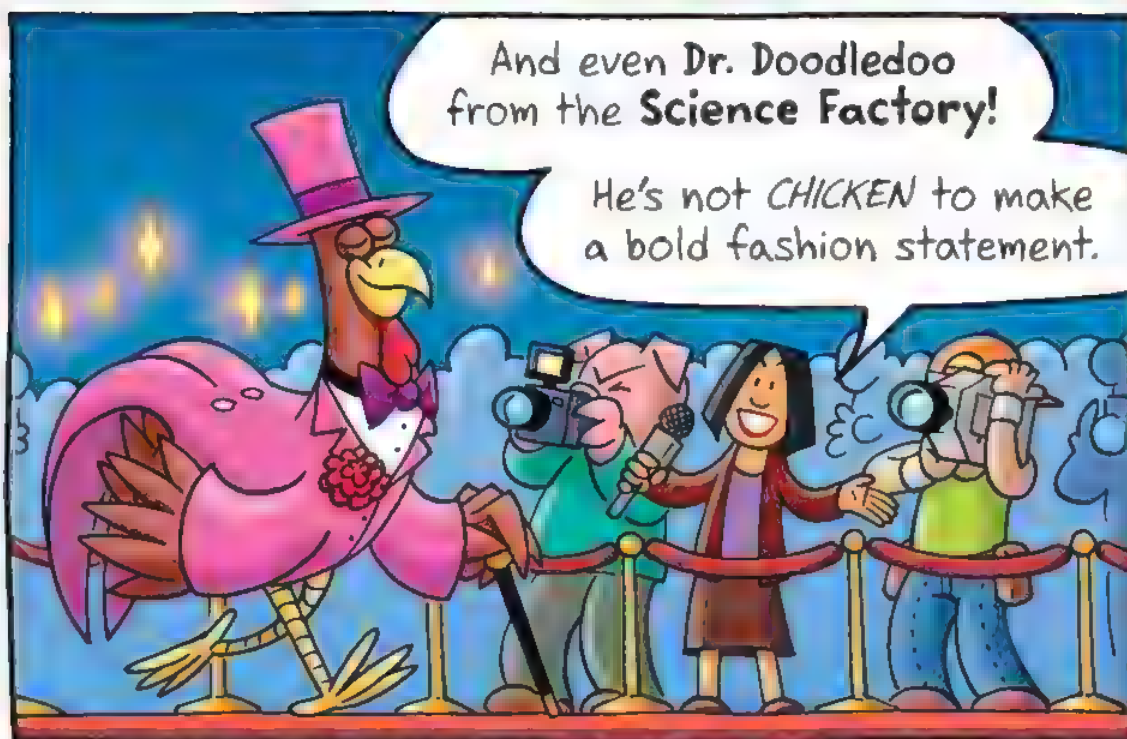




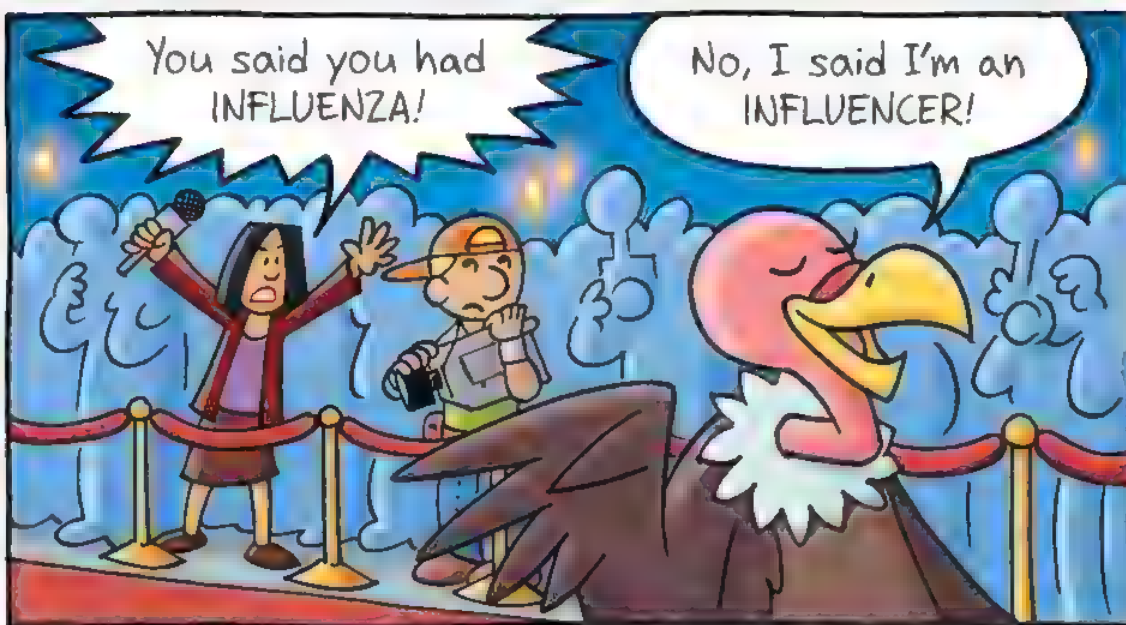


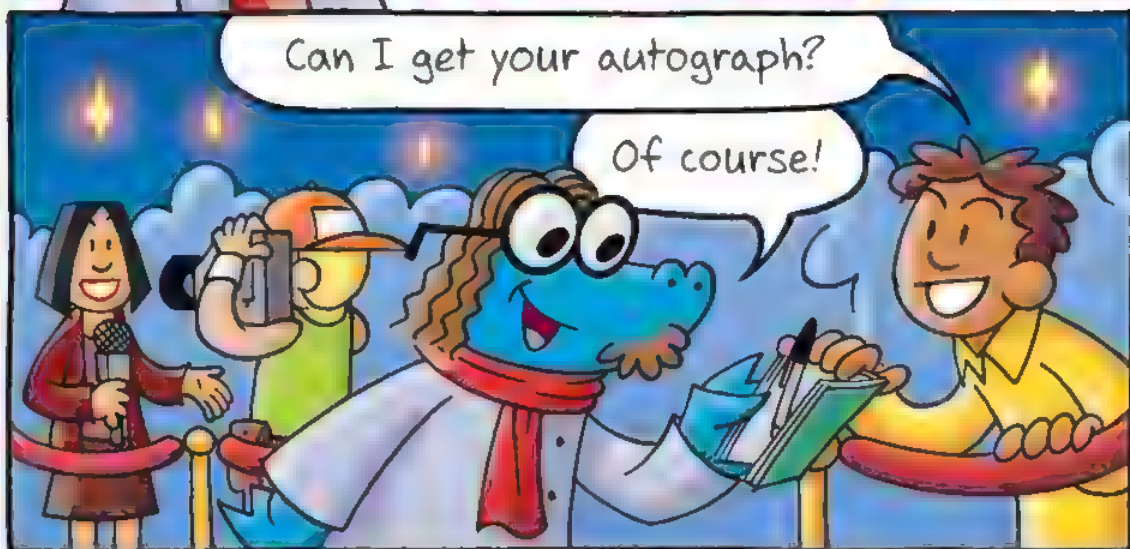
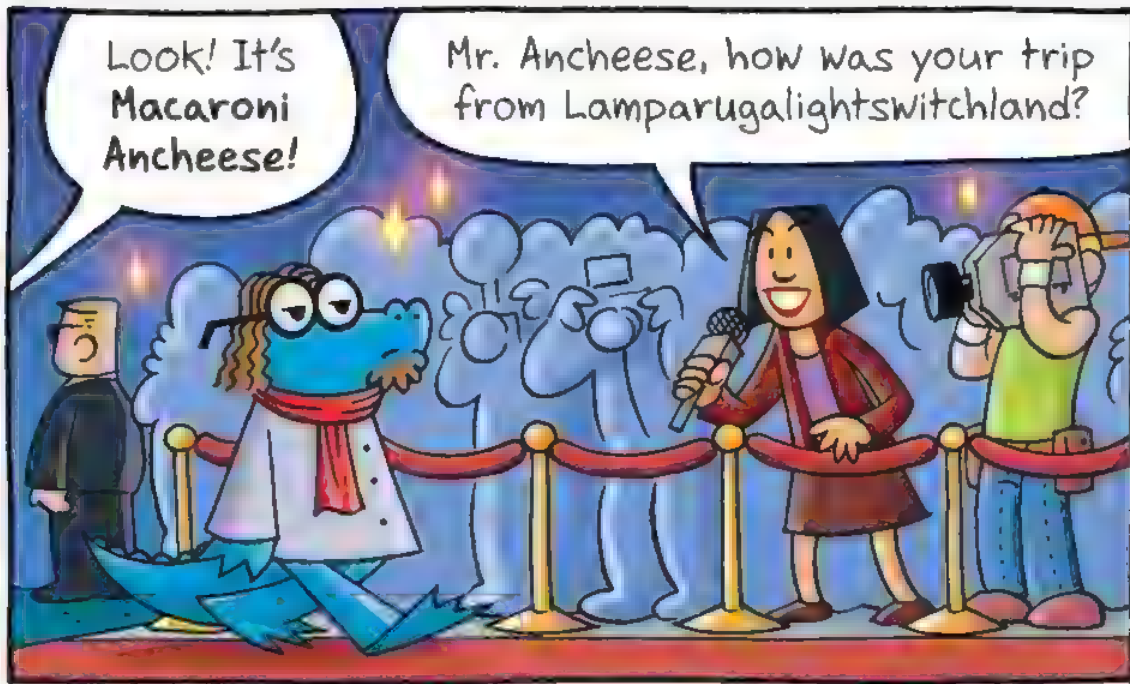




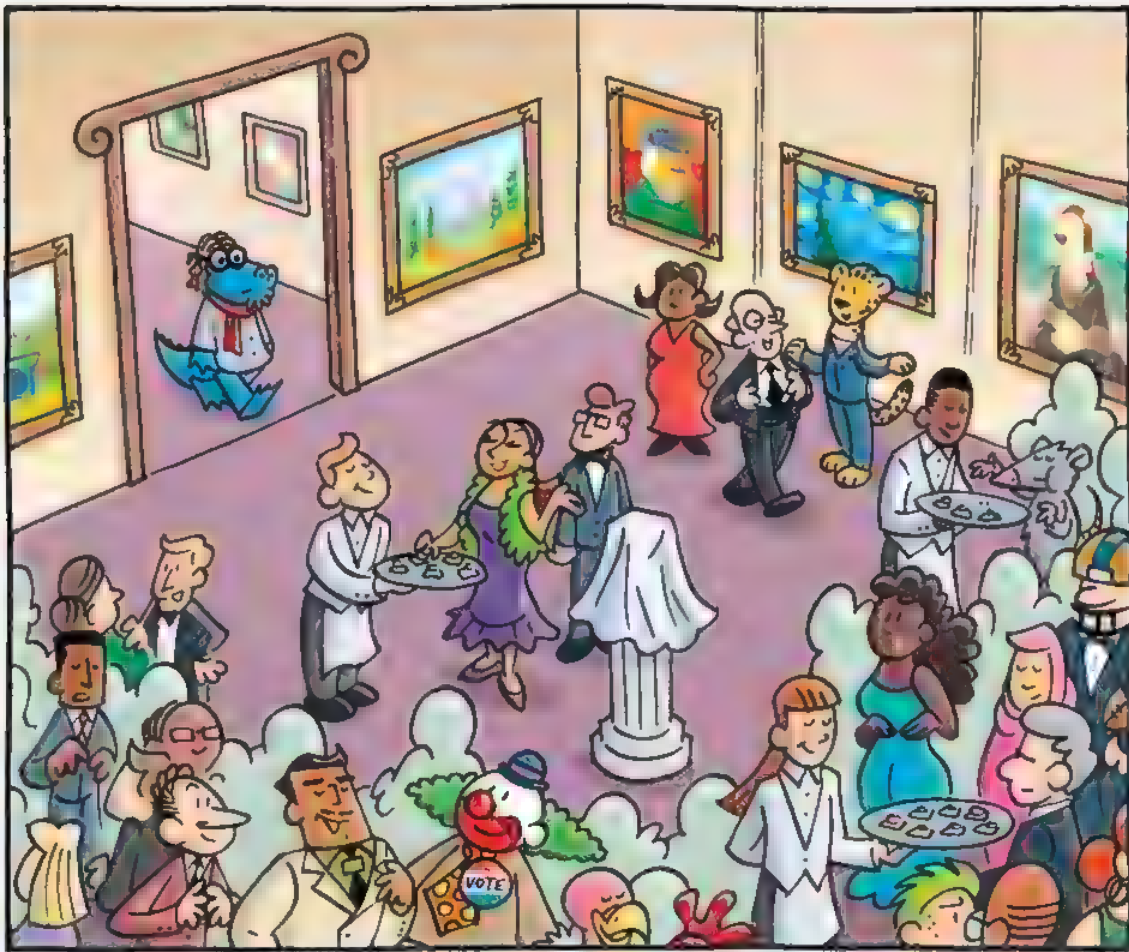












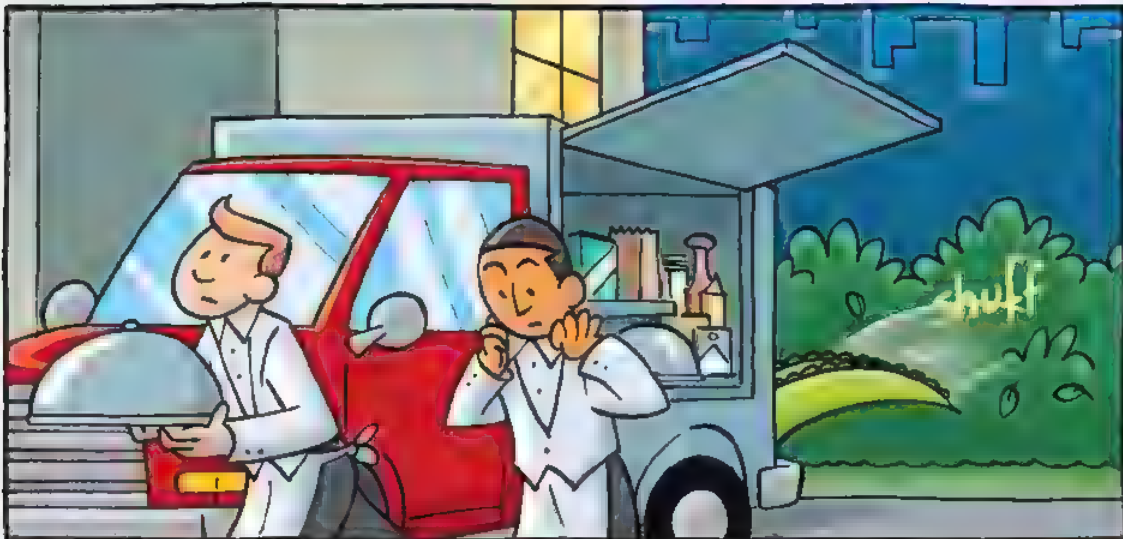
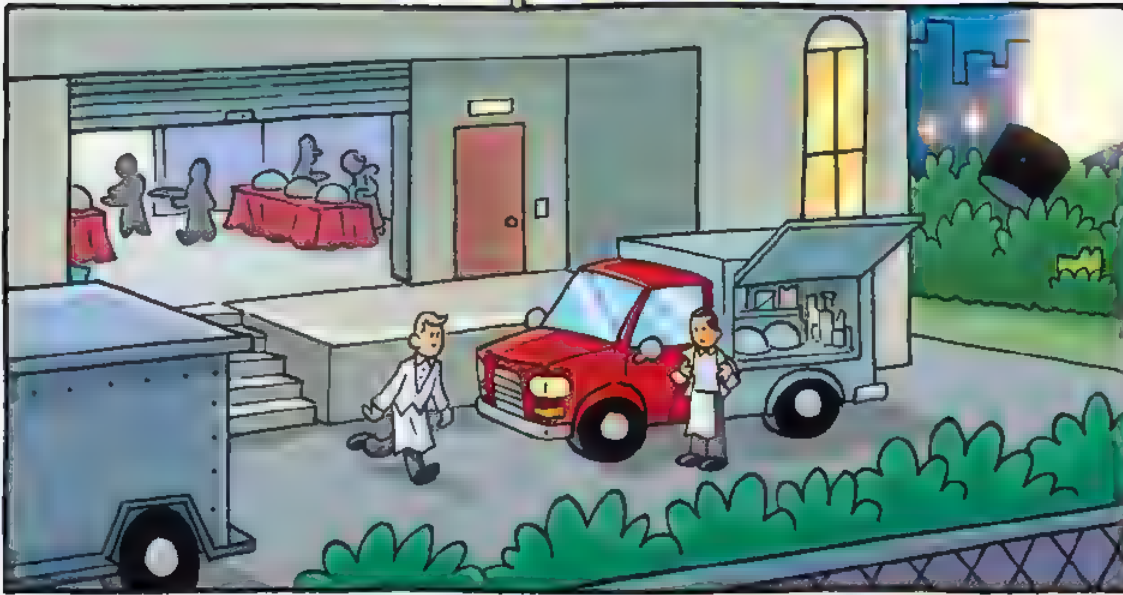
Wow, look at all the people. And the detail! Now that I'm an artist, I can appreciate just how much work goes into drawing a page like this.



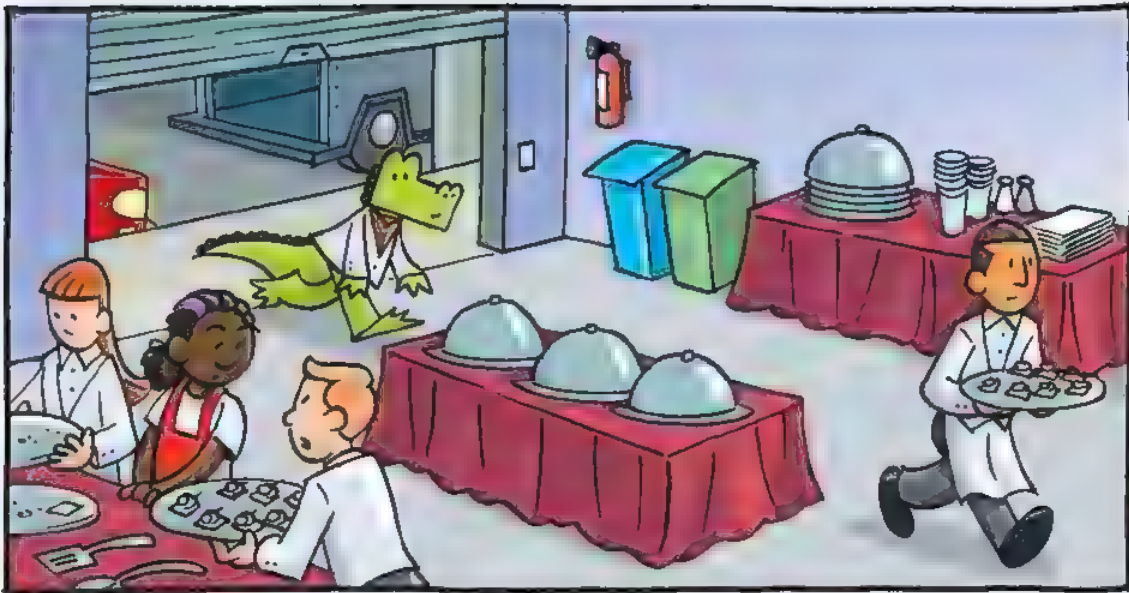
I hope the scene of Brash sneaking into the gala is easier to draw.



Chapter 10



This should
do the trick.





Ooh, hors
d'oeuvres!

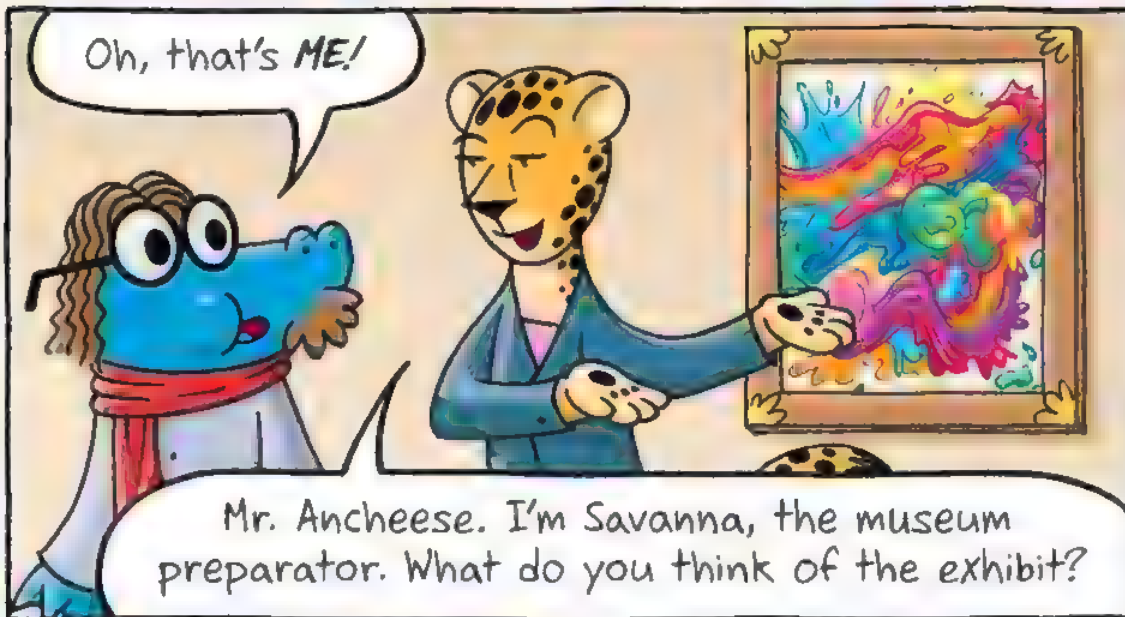


Mmm, shrimp
and garlic!

Ancheese!

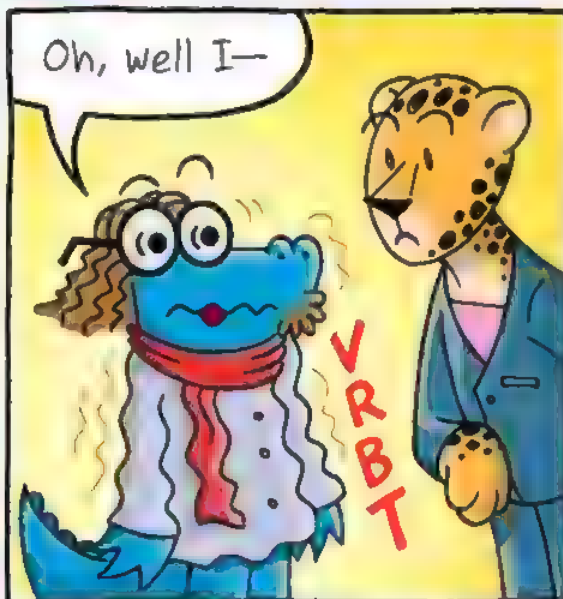


And cheese?
I don't taste
cheese...



Oh, that's **ME**!

Mr. Ancheese. I'm Savanna, the museum
preparator. What do you think of the exhibit?



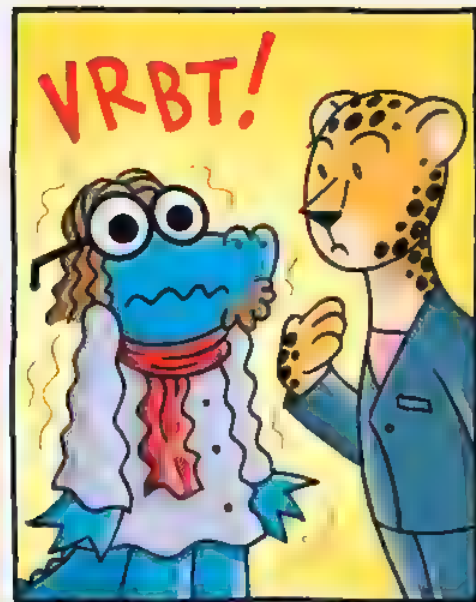
Oh, well I—

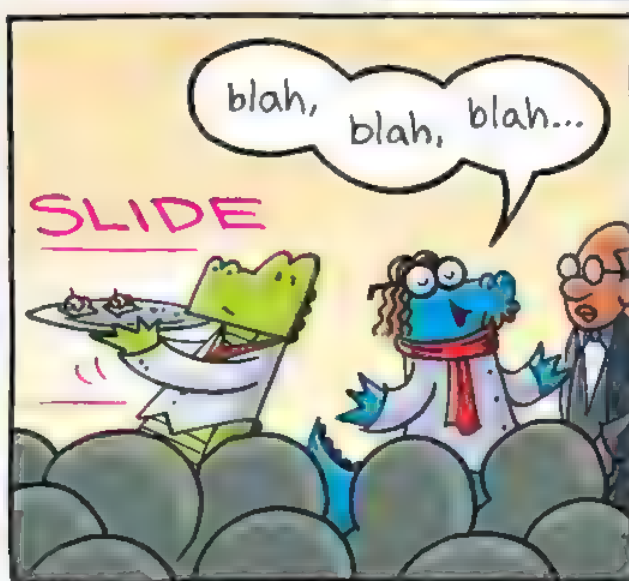
V R B T

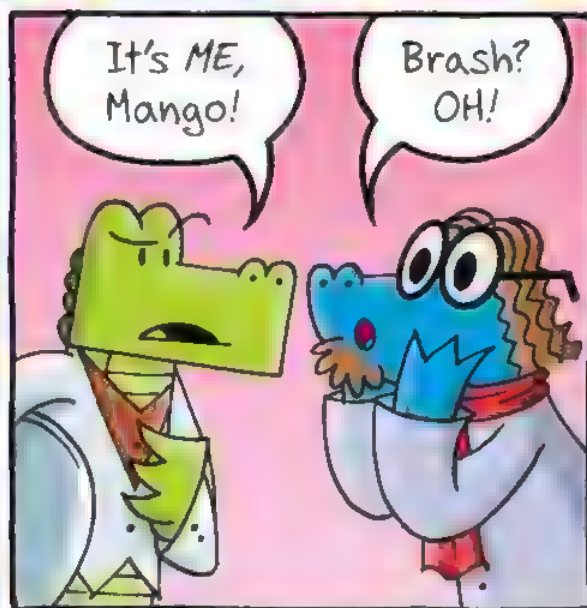
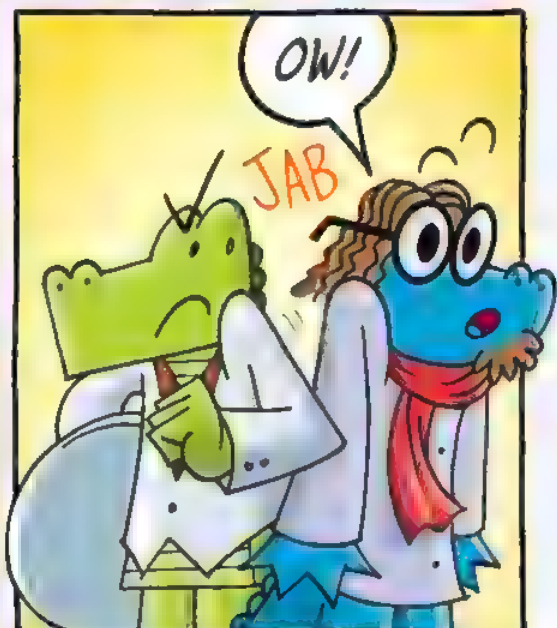


You're...shivering.
Are you cold?

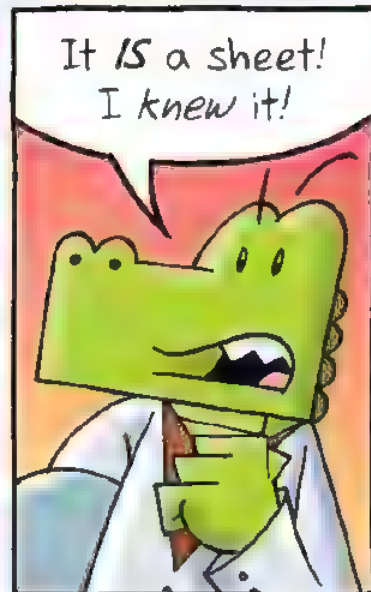
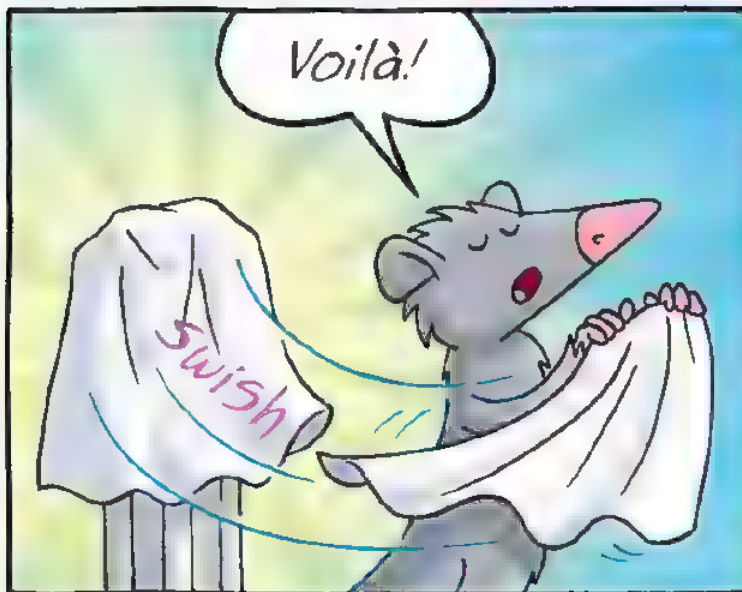
Uh, YES!

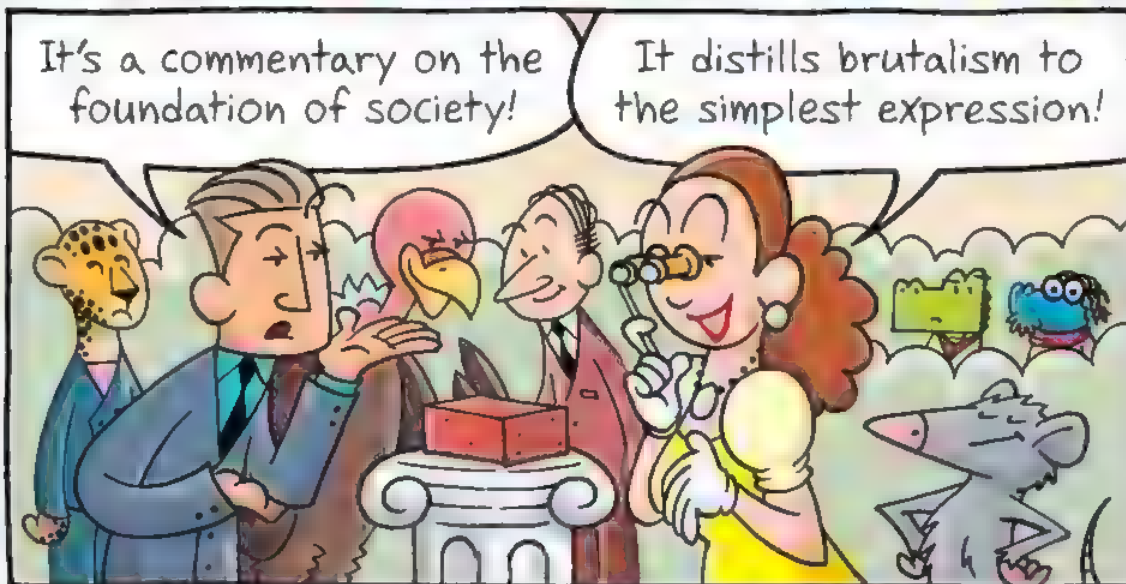






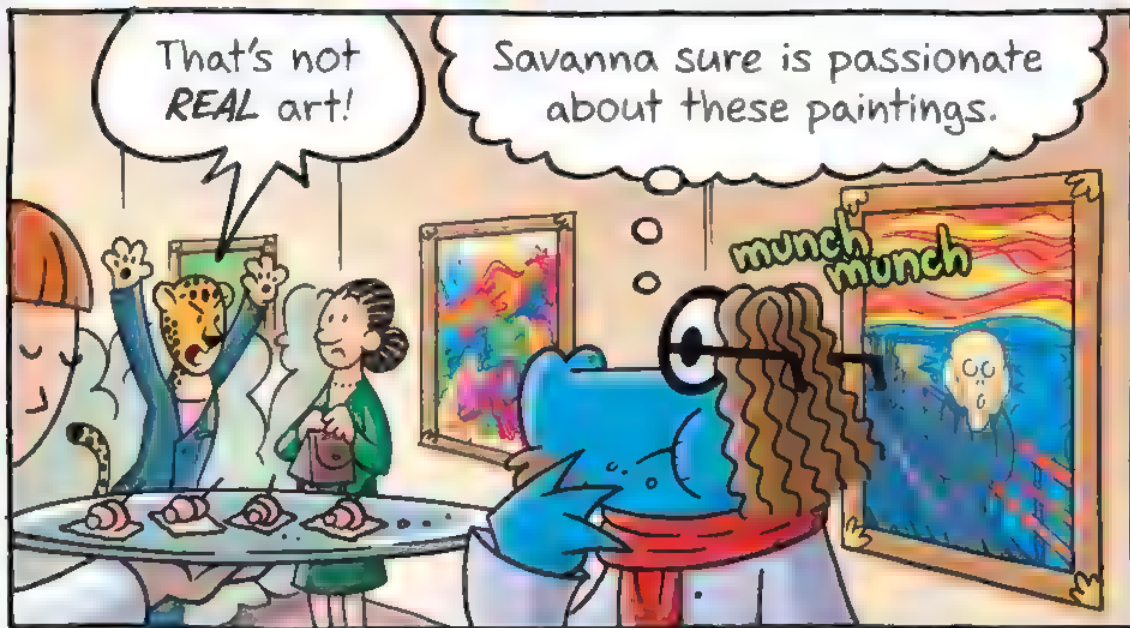






Chapter 11



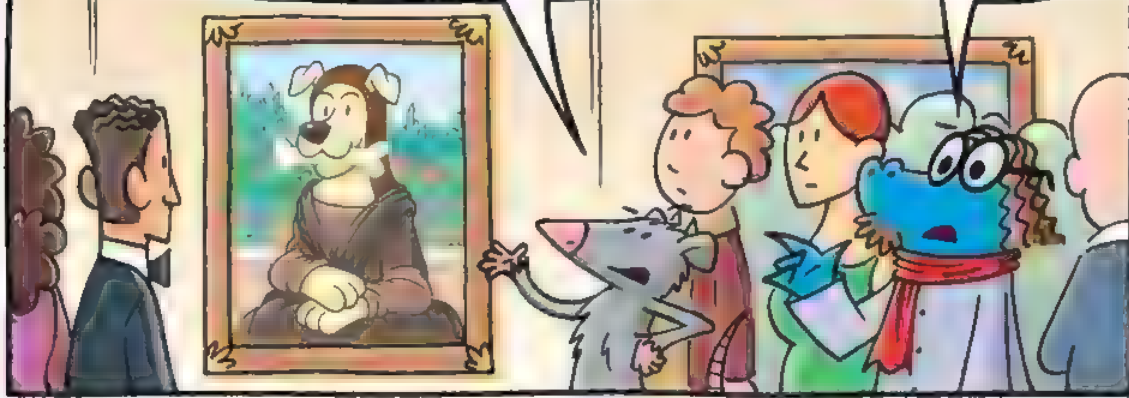


I didn't **create** that brick. I found it in the road.
But by putting it on a pedestal and calling it art,
I made people **REACT**.



Take this "Bona Lisa." Sure, it was made with skill and talent.
But what does it **SAY**?

Um...
Bark? Woof?
Bow wow?



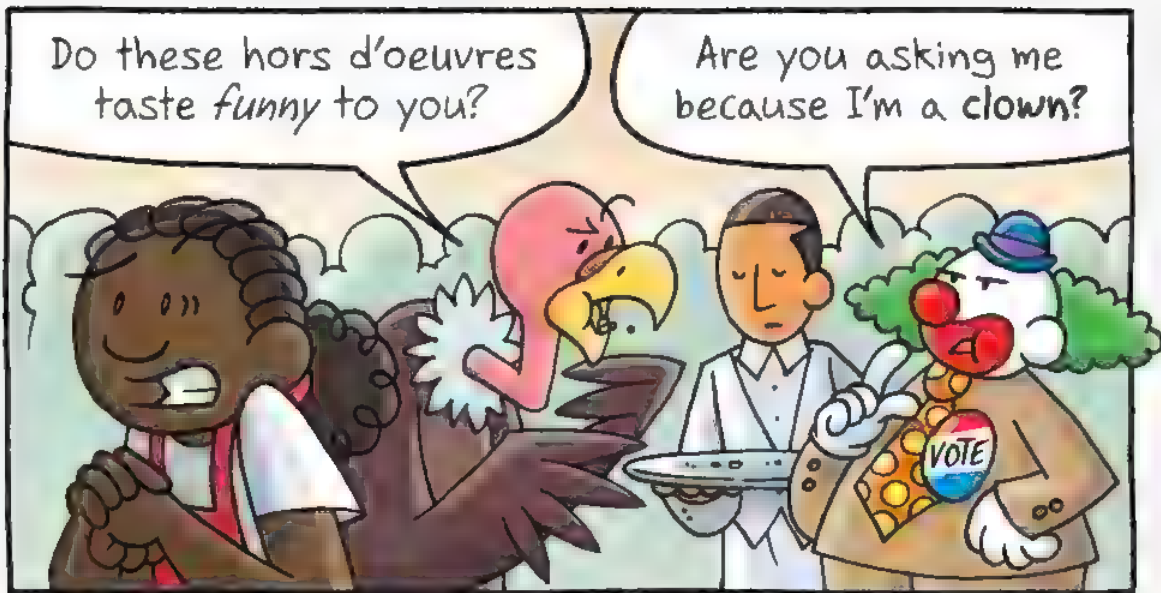
Exactly! **BOW DOWN** to
the art snobs who
decide what's "good
enough" to belong
in a museum.



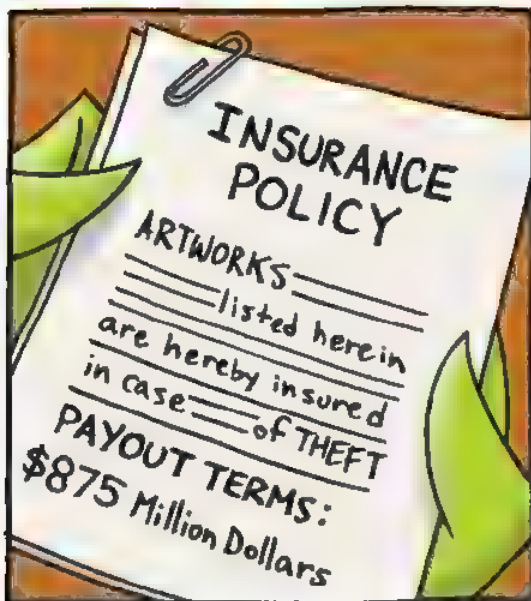
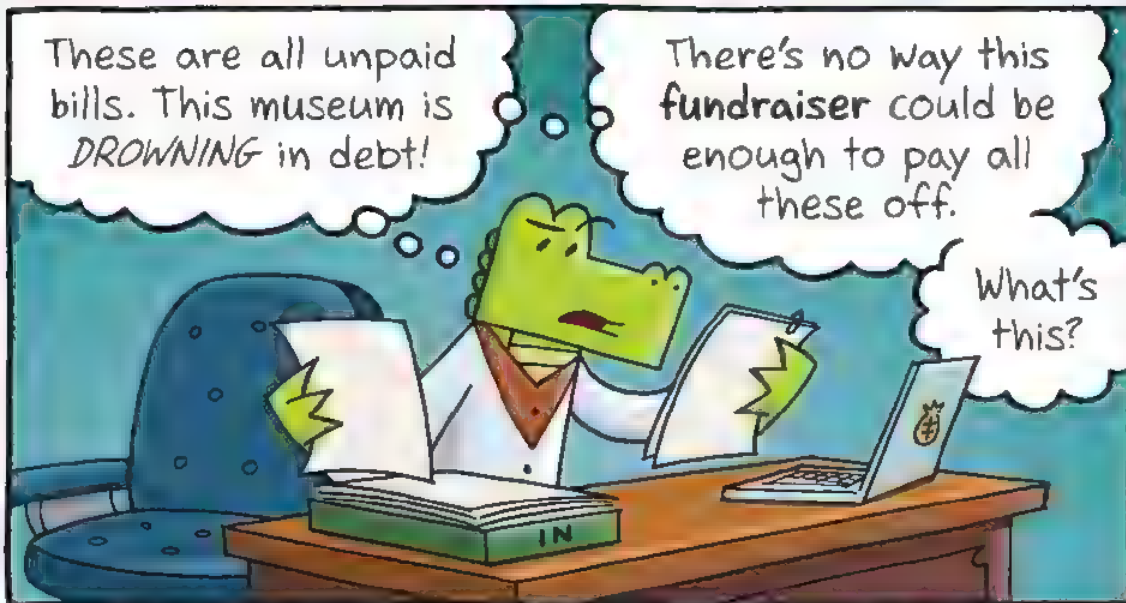
How many of those
have you served?



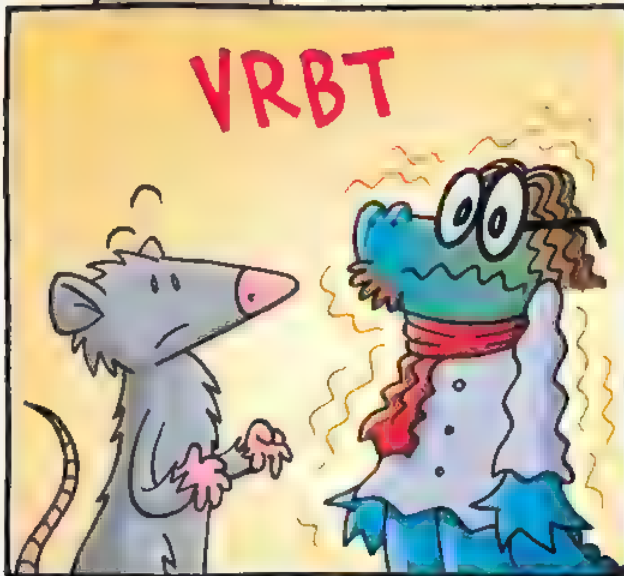
Uh...all of them?



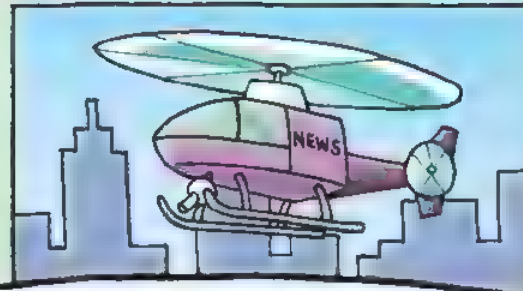






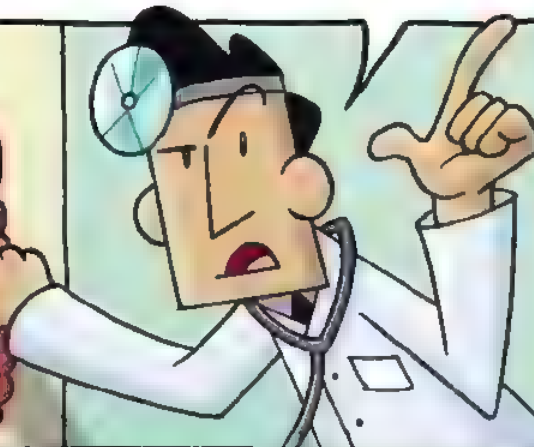


**WE INTERRUPT THIS COMIC FOR A
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**



Hi, I'm Dr. Jake Hardbones,
brain surgeon. You may also know
me as Doctor Copter, the *Action
News Now* helicopter in the sky.

As a brain surgeon, I know a lot about stomachs.
Because some people *THINK* with their stomachs. And
on the next few pages, everyone will be *TALKING* with
their stomachs...if you catch my meaning.

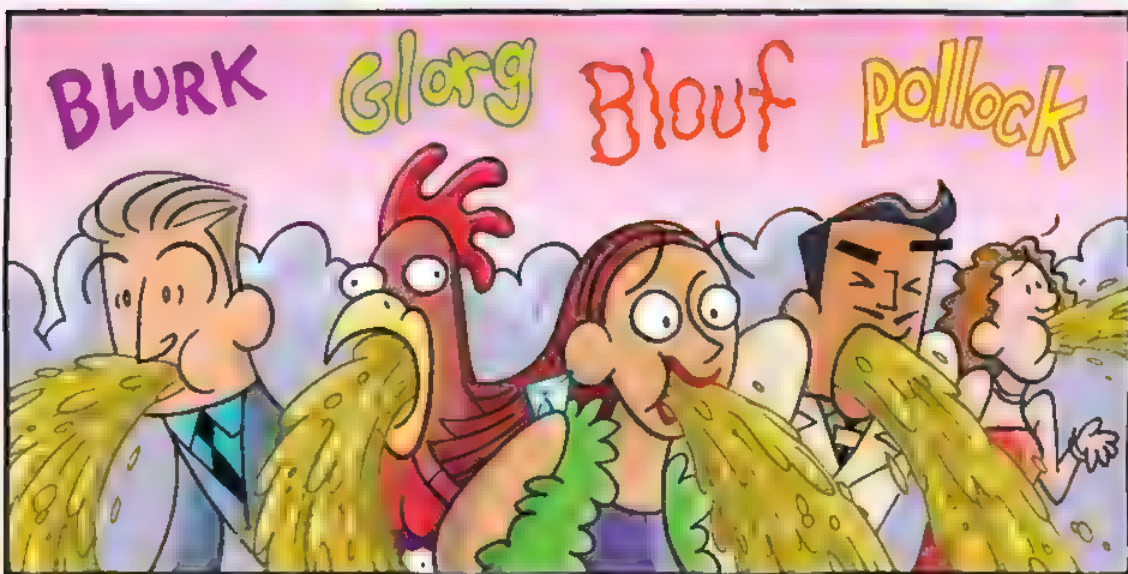
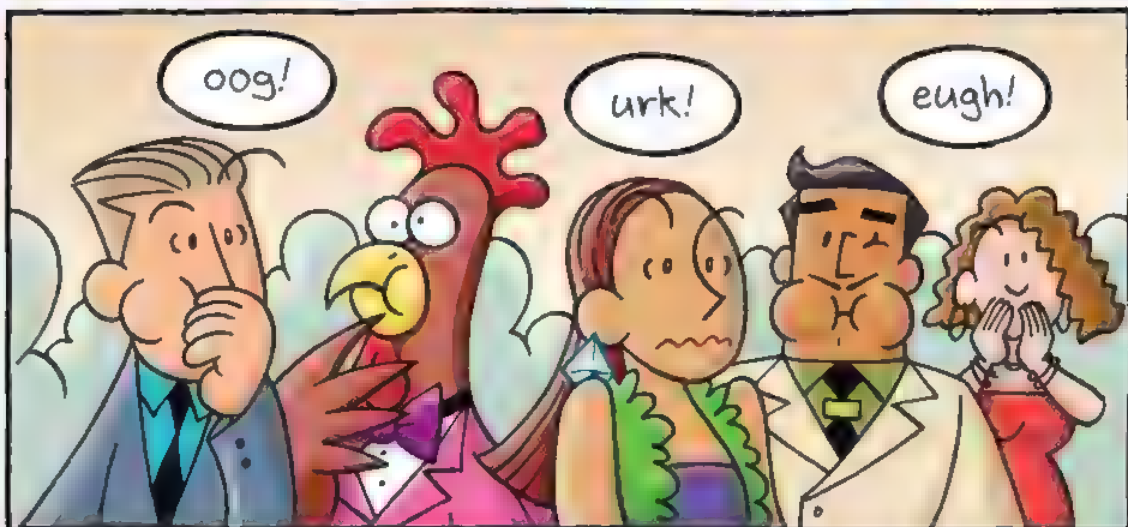


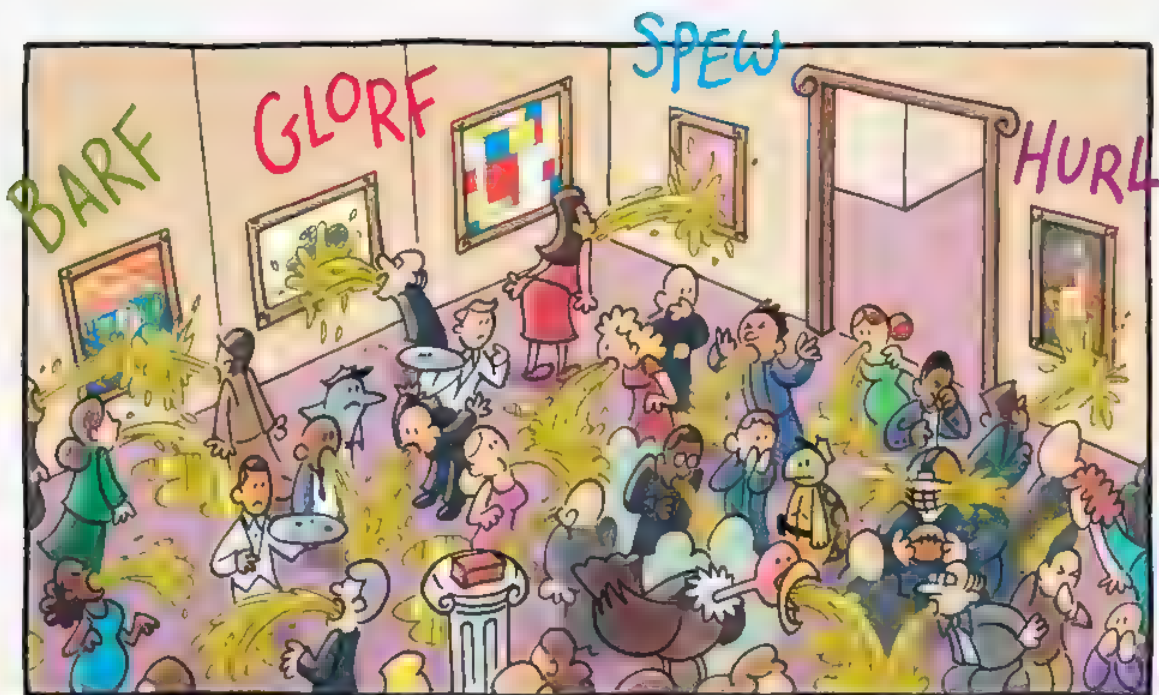
What you are about to see is very
graphic. This is a graphic novel,
after all. If you'd like to avoid
the unpleasantness, skip ahead
to page, oh, let's say 121.

Otherwise,
**HOLD ON TO YOUR
POTATOES!**



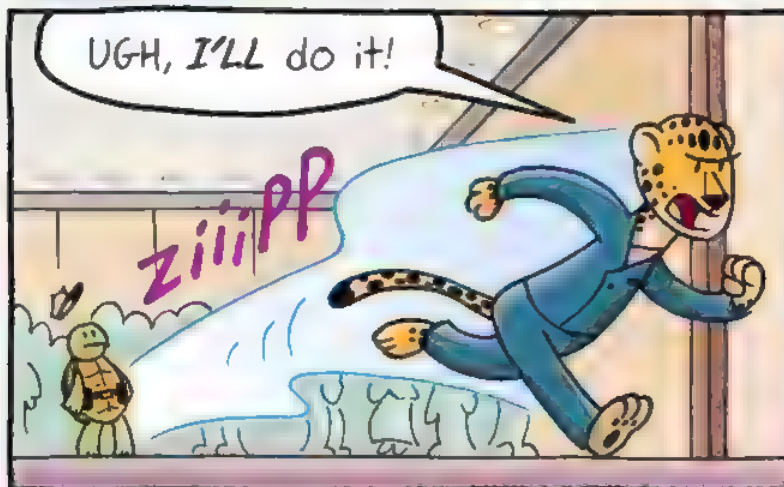






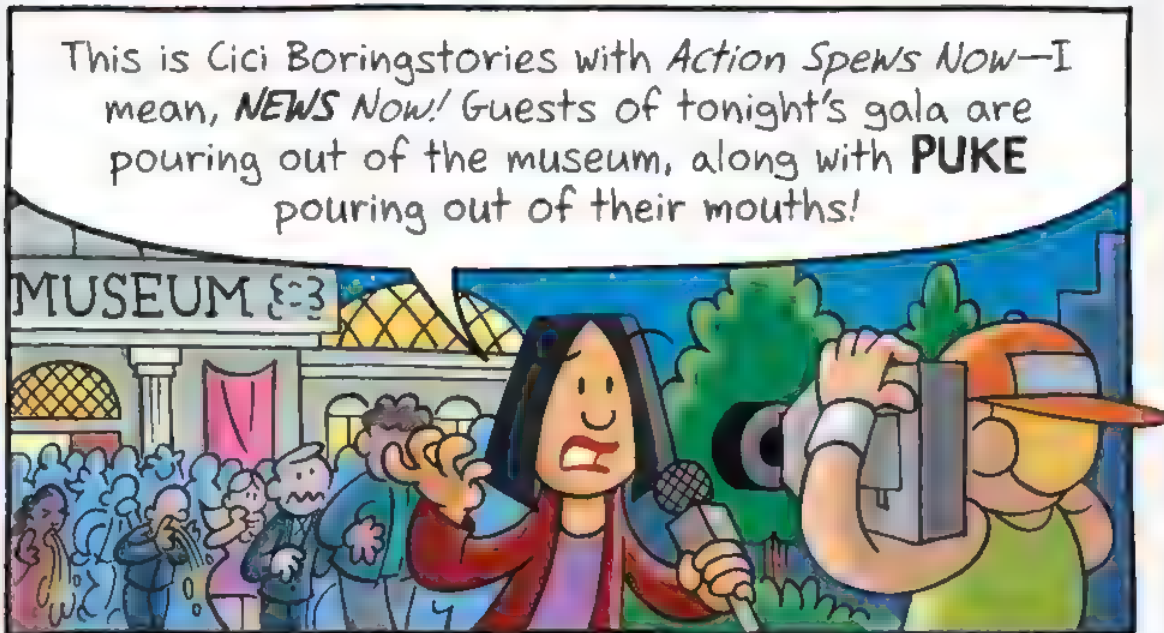
Todd! I mean, Paul! We have to evacuate the building
before everyone **BARFS** on **ALL THE PAINTINGS!**
Pull the fire alarm!

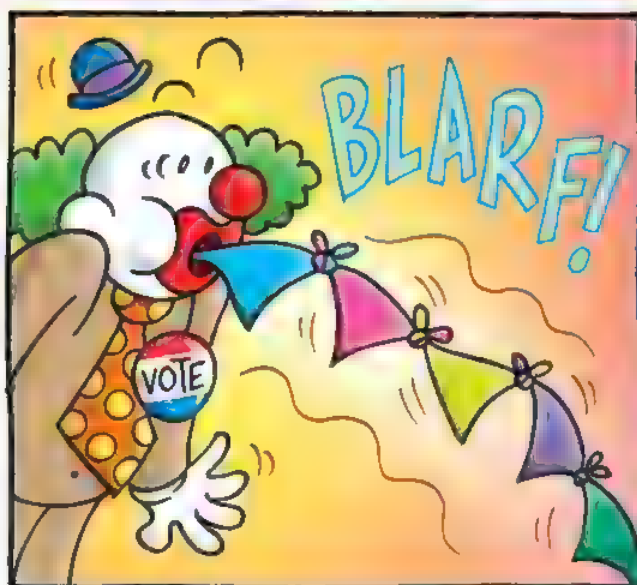
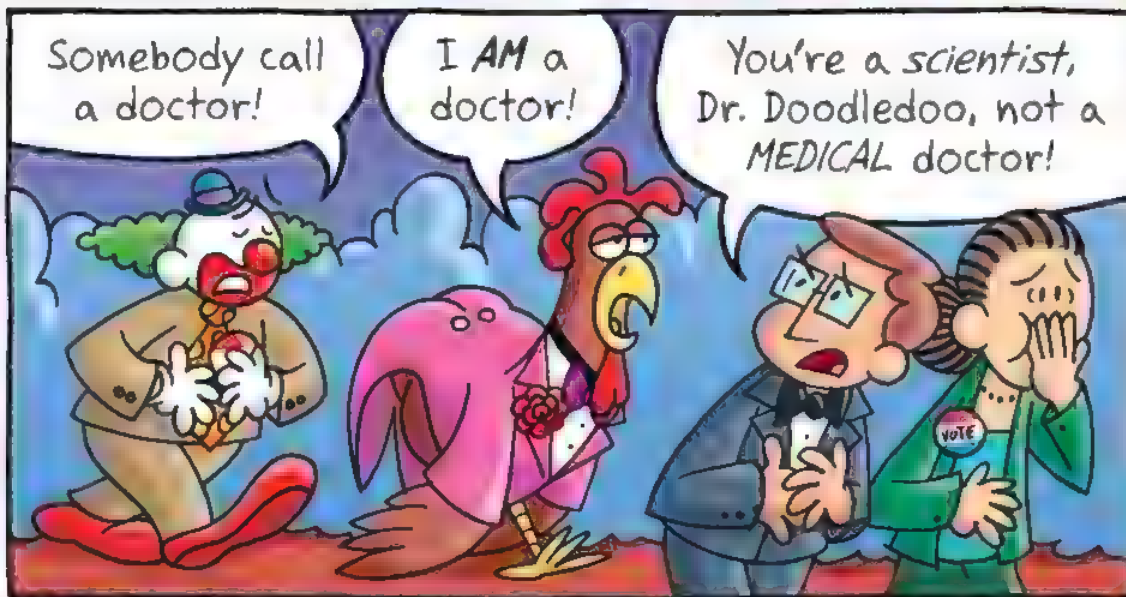


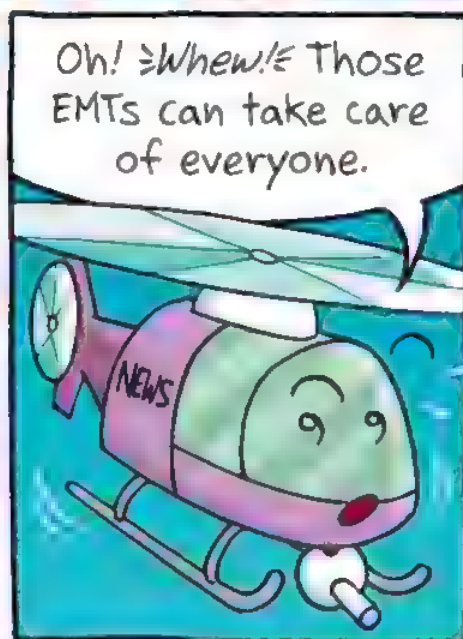
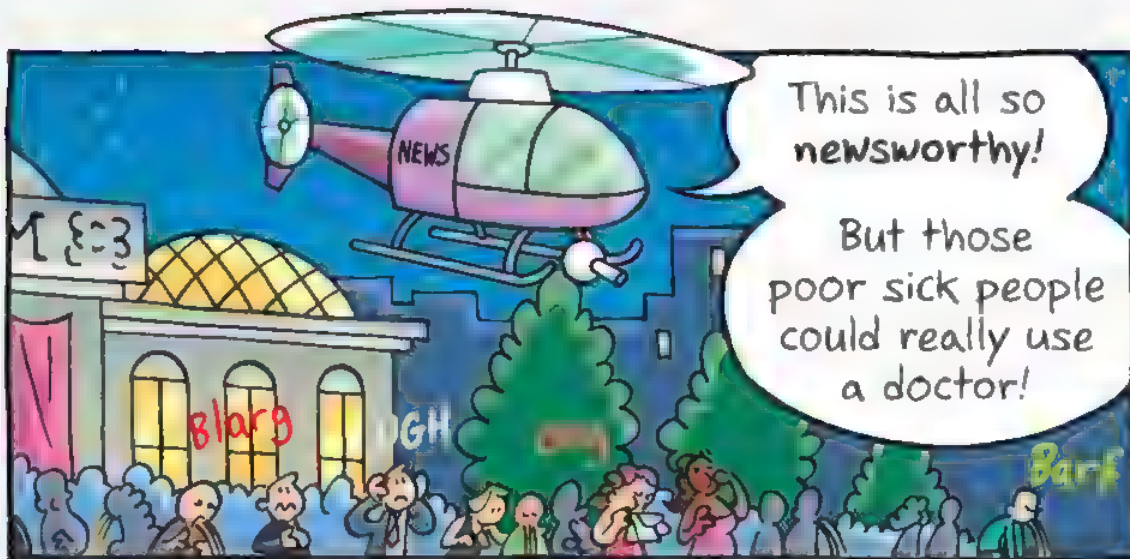




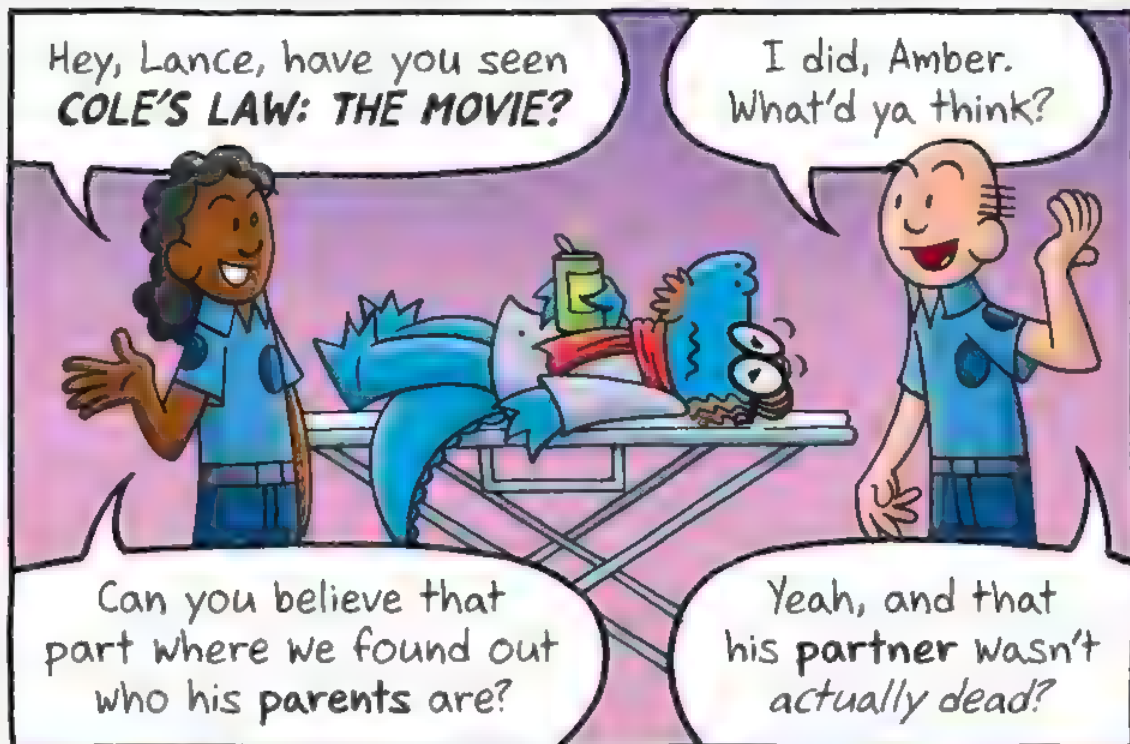
Chapter 12





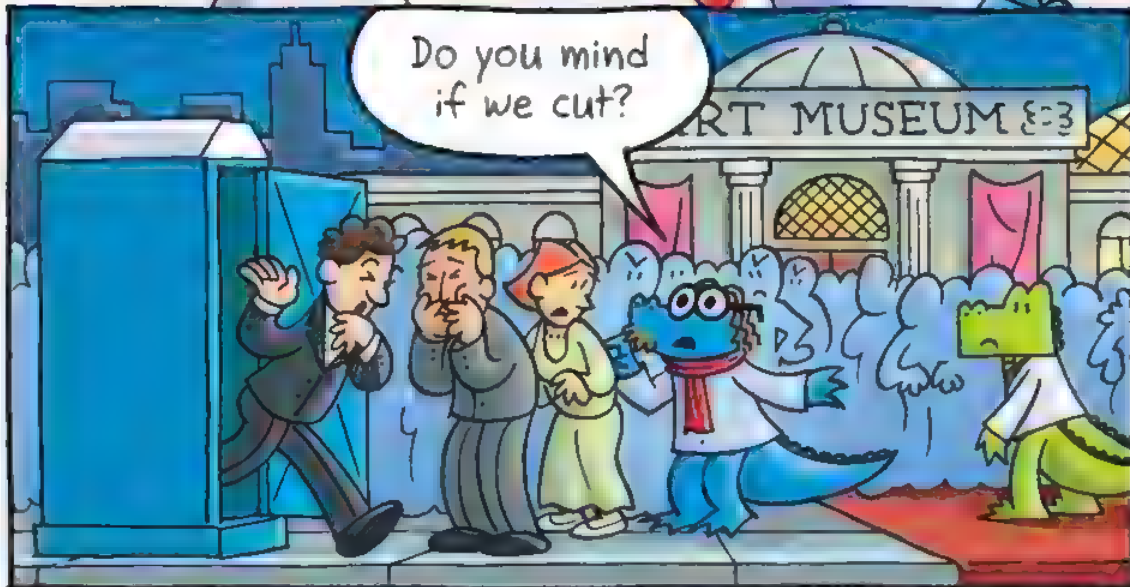






The curator and caterer are in cahoots! He had the art insured for MILLIONS in case of theft, but since we foiled that plan she decided to sabotage the gala by POISONING THE HORS D'OEUVRES!







But they won't escape the **InvestiGators!**

Nice to see your true colors, Mango.



It's good to be myself again, Brash... Even if I am still a little *rumbly* in my *tumbly*.

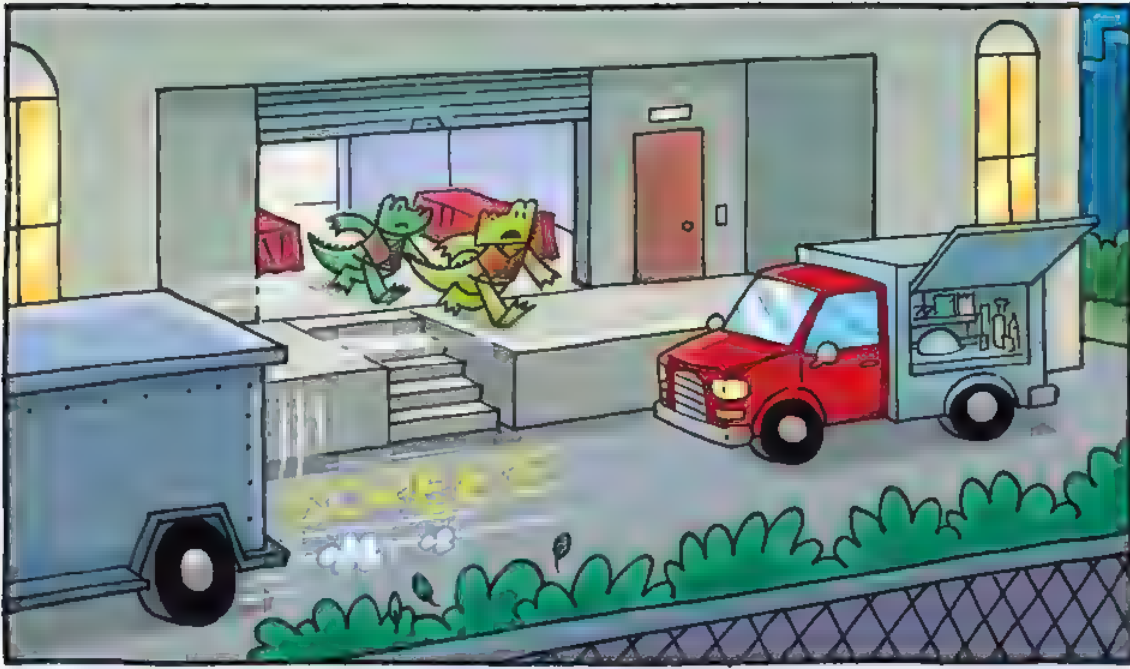
The thief must've taken the art out through the staff entrance.

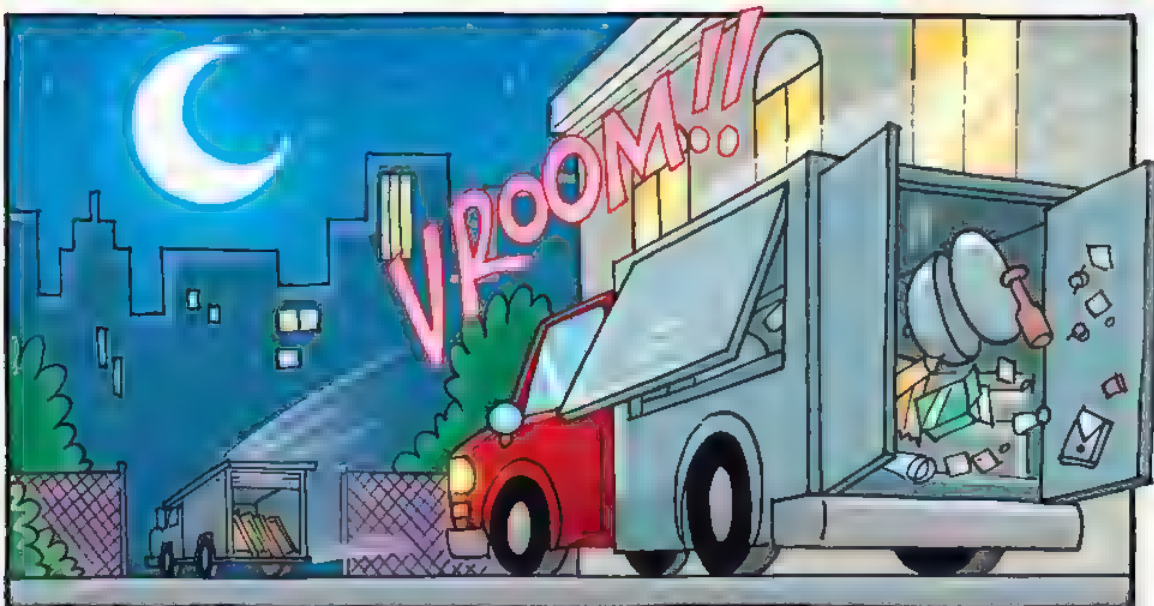
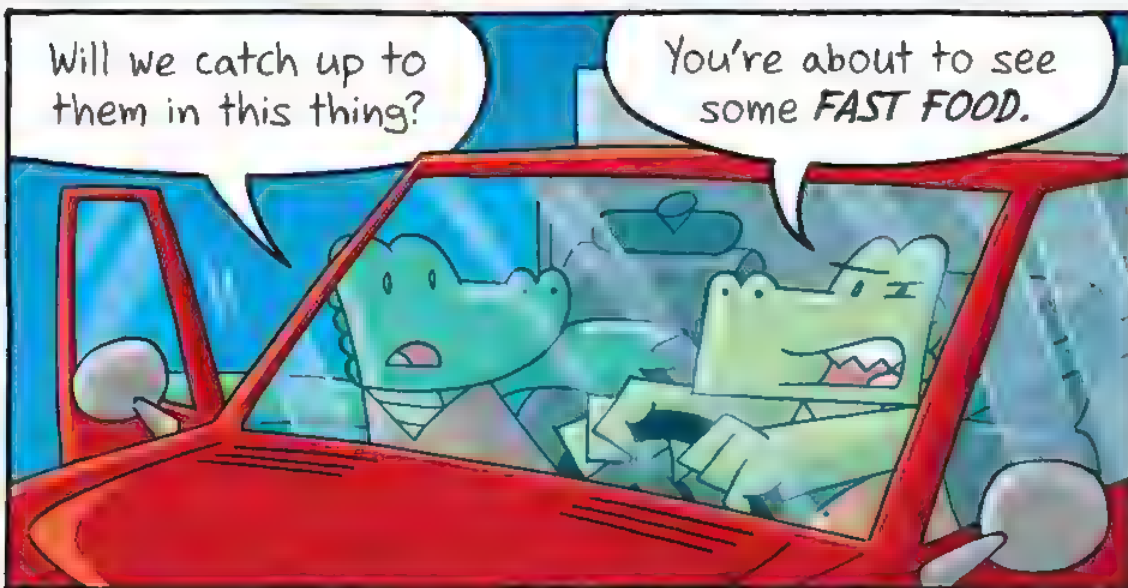


LET'S GO! They can't have gotten far!

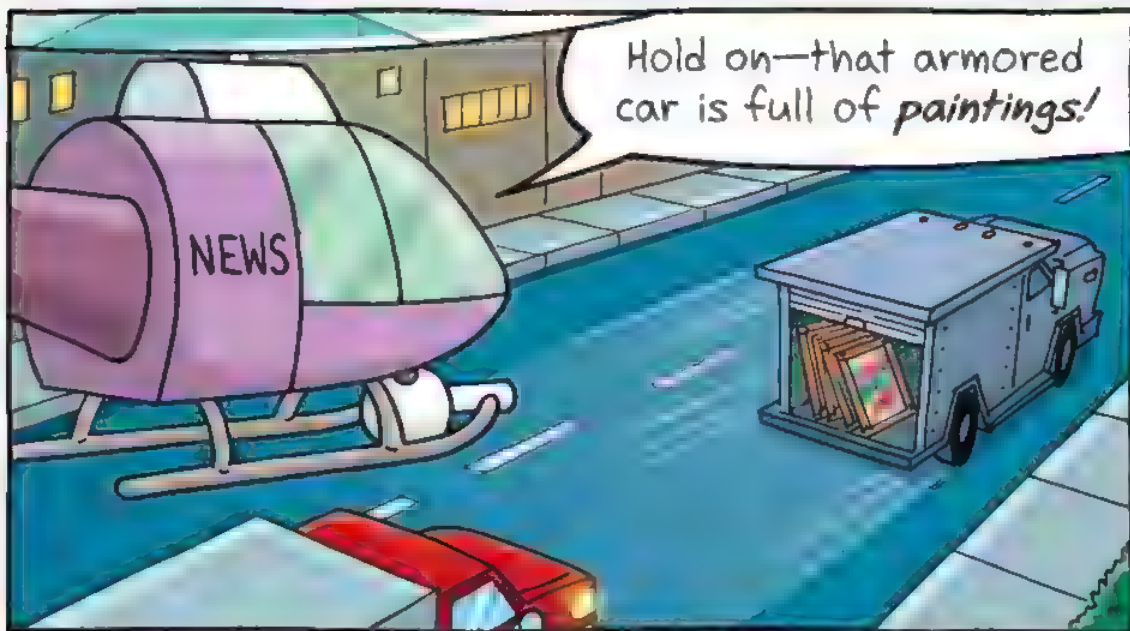
Now I know how you felt for most of book two, Brash!

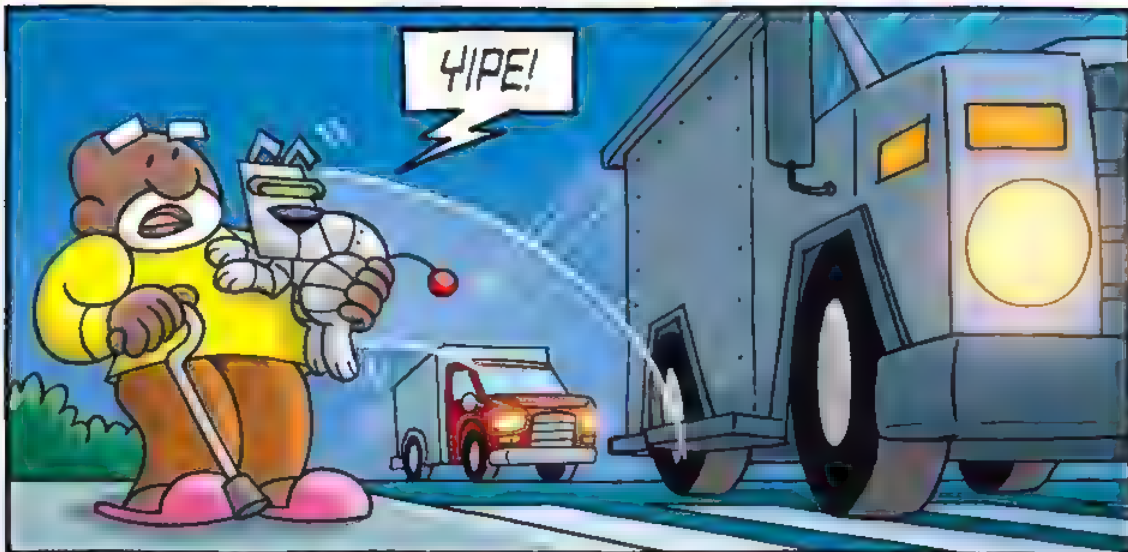
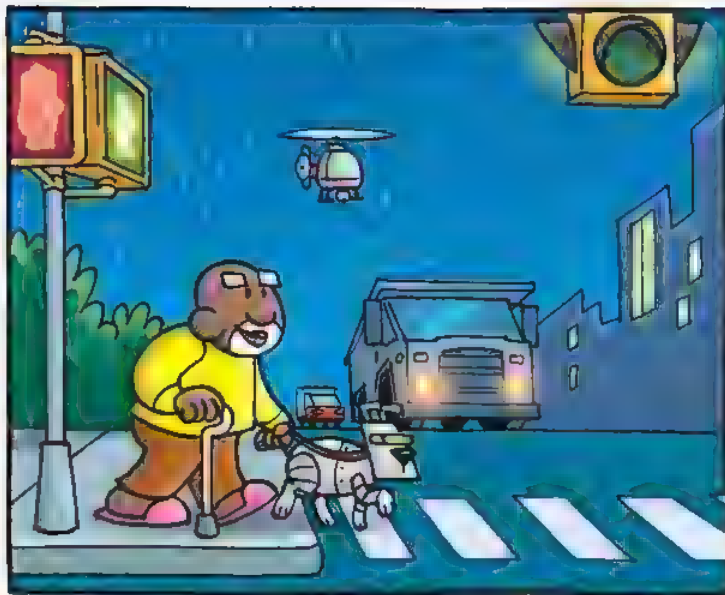
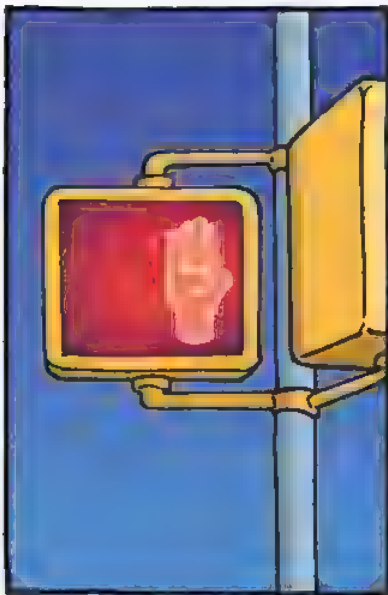


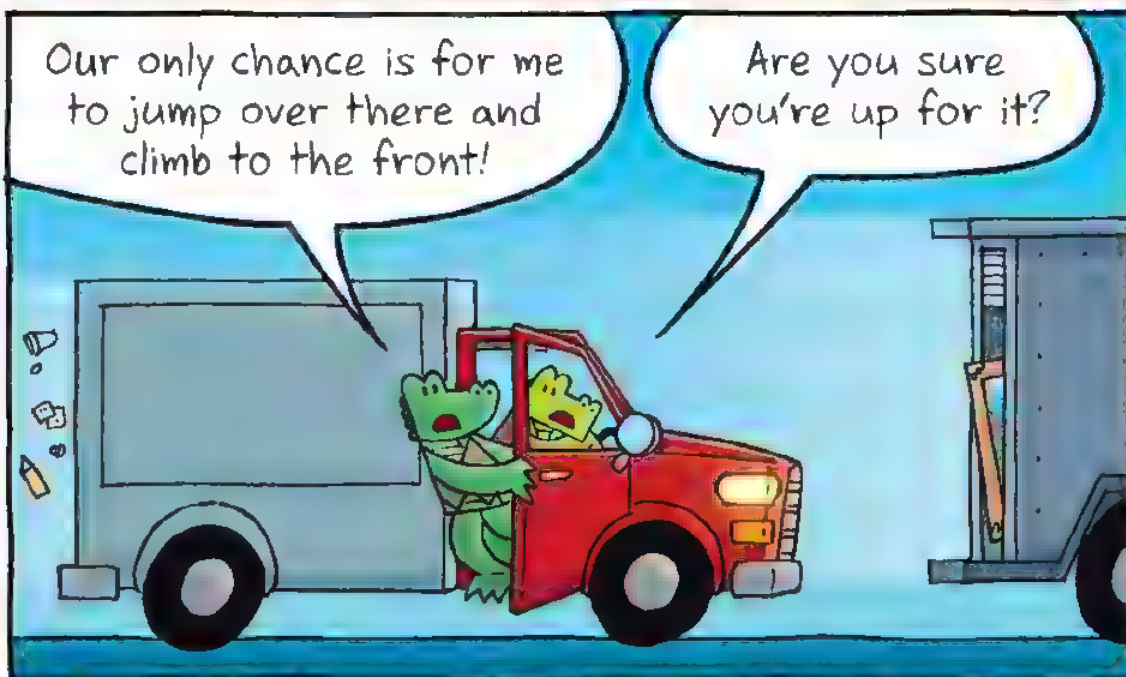




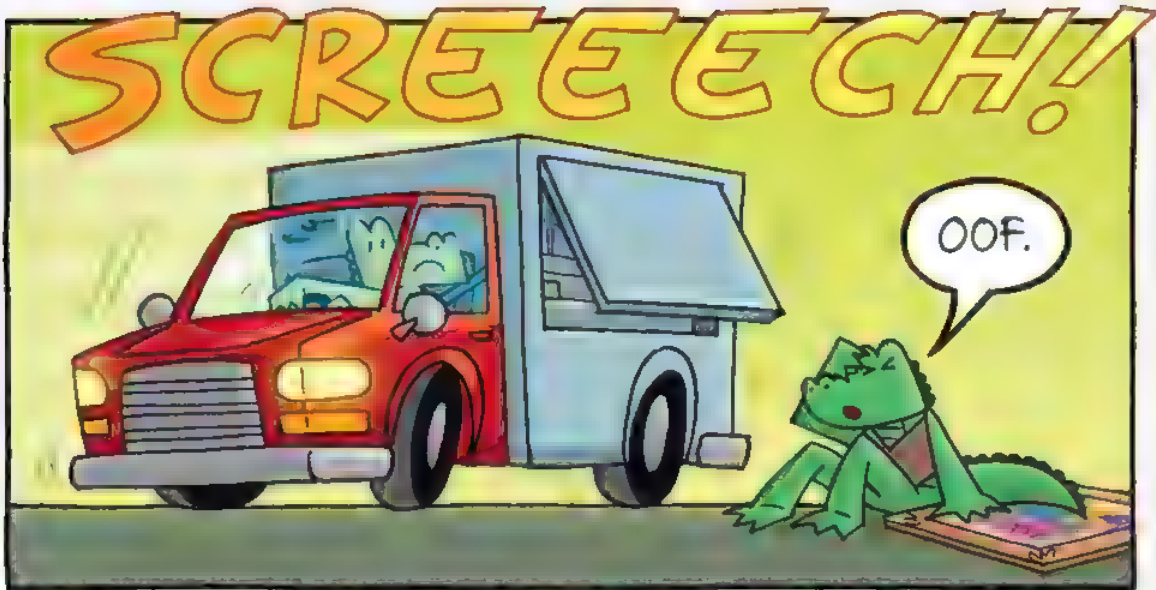
Chapter 13

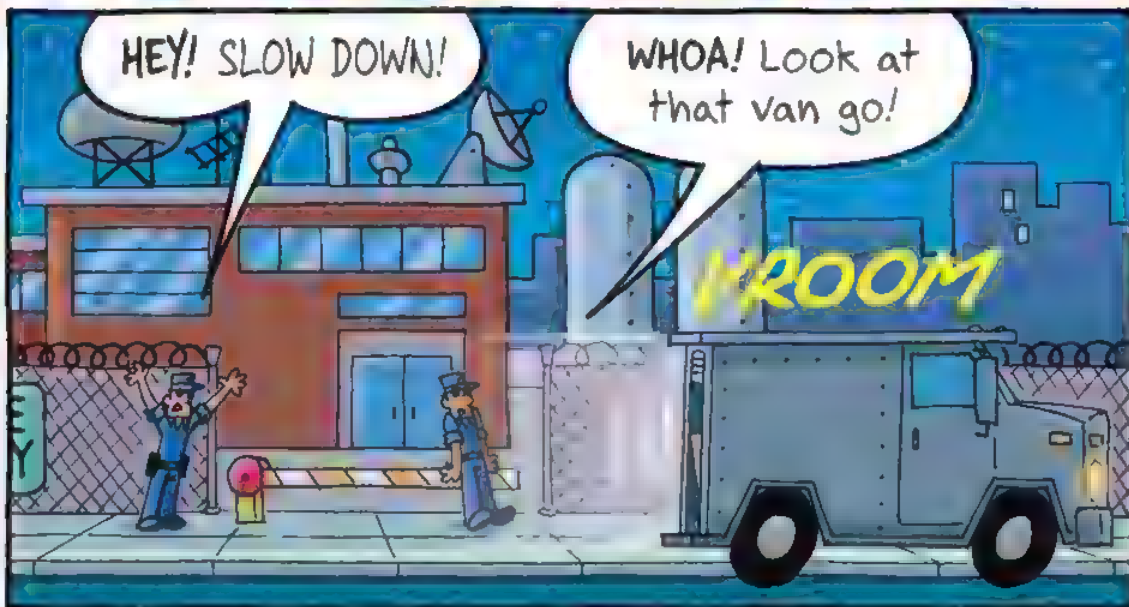




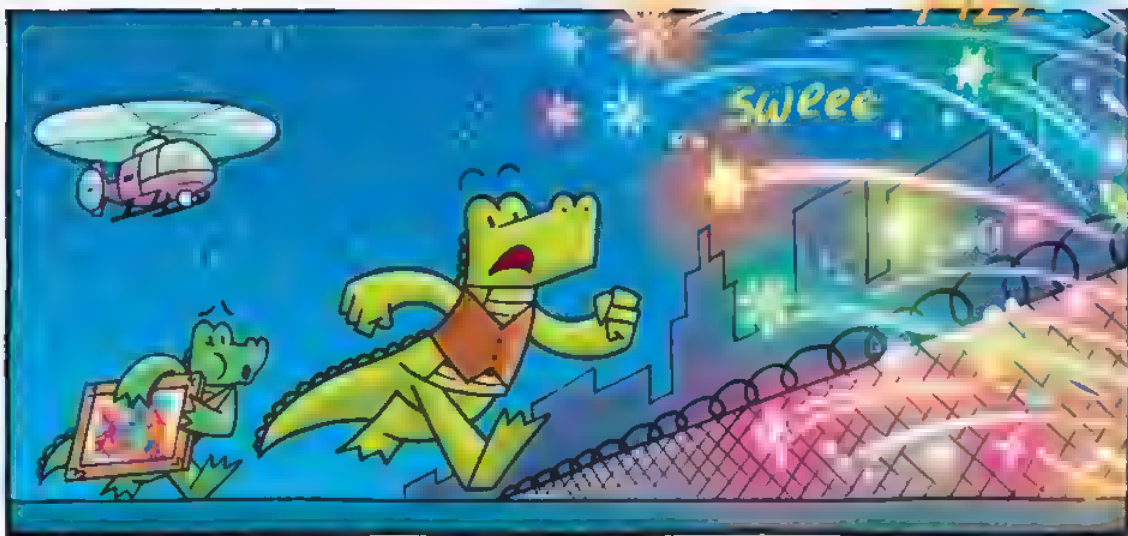


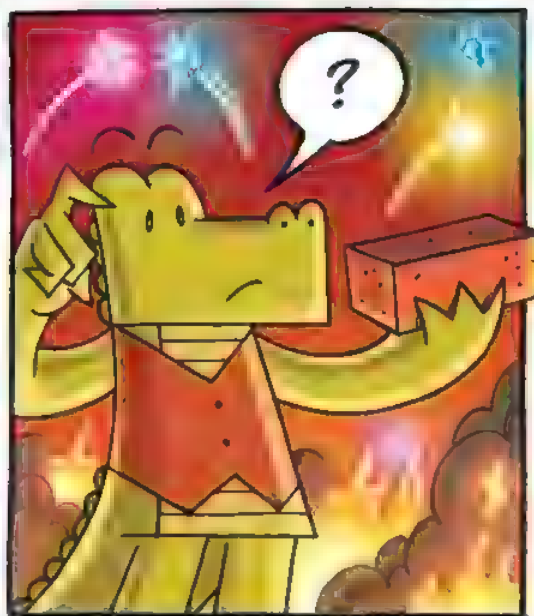
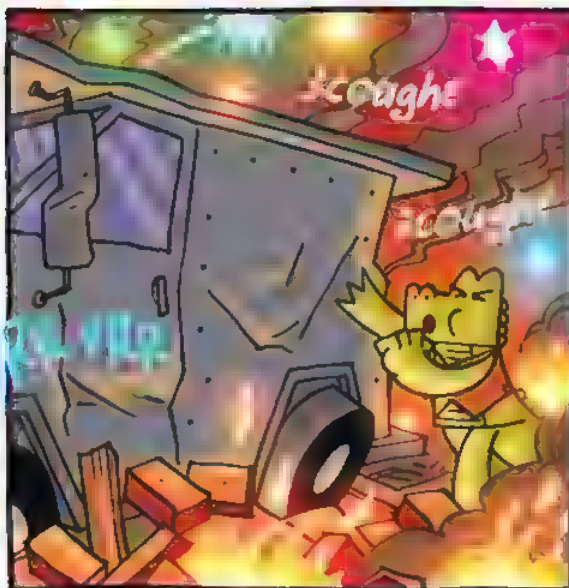


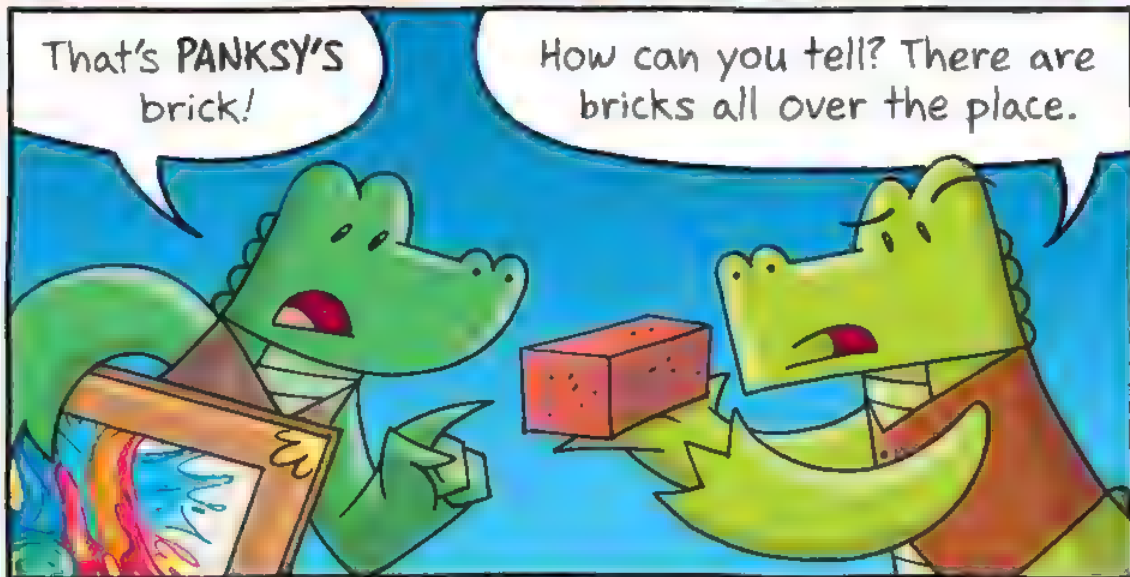




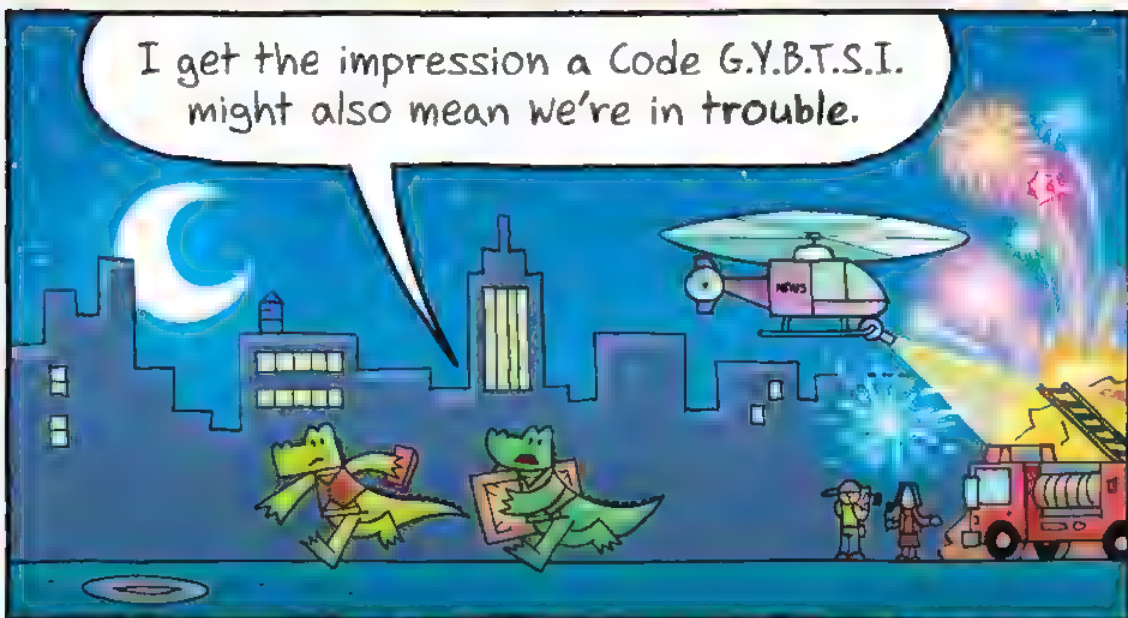
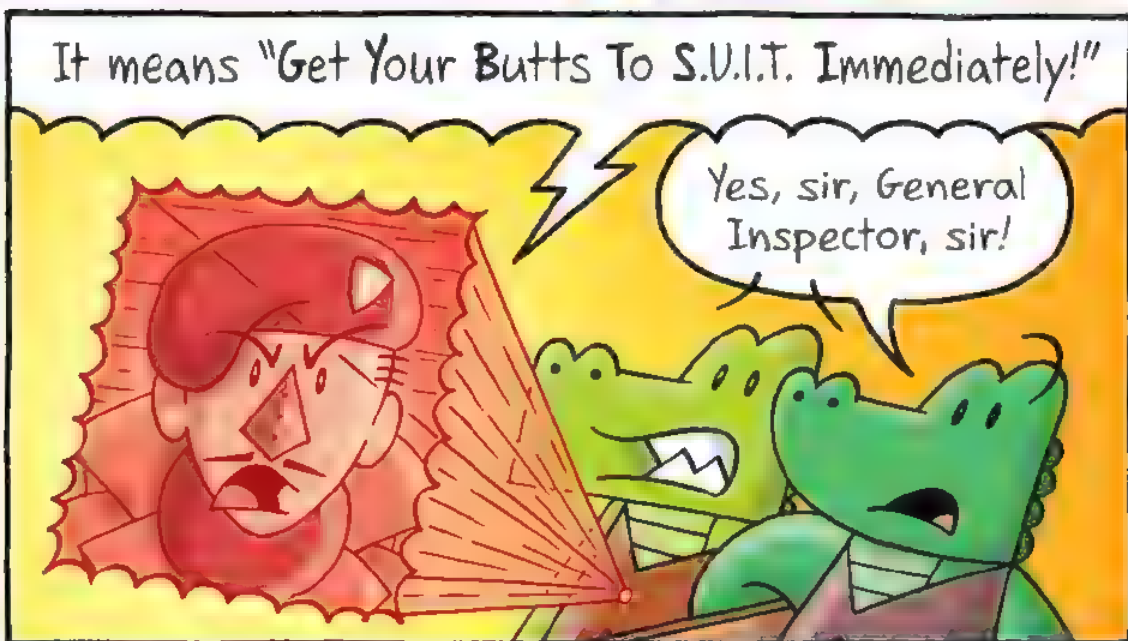
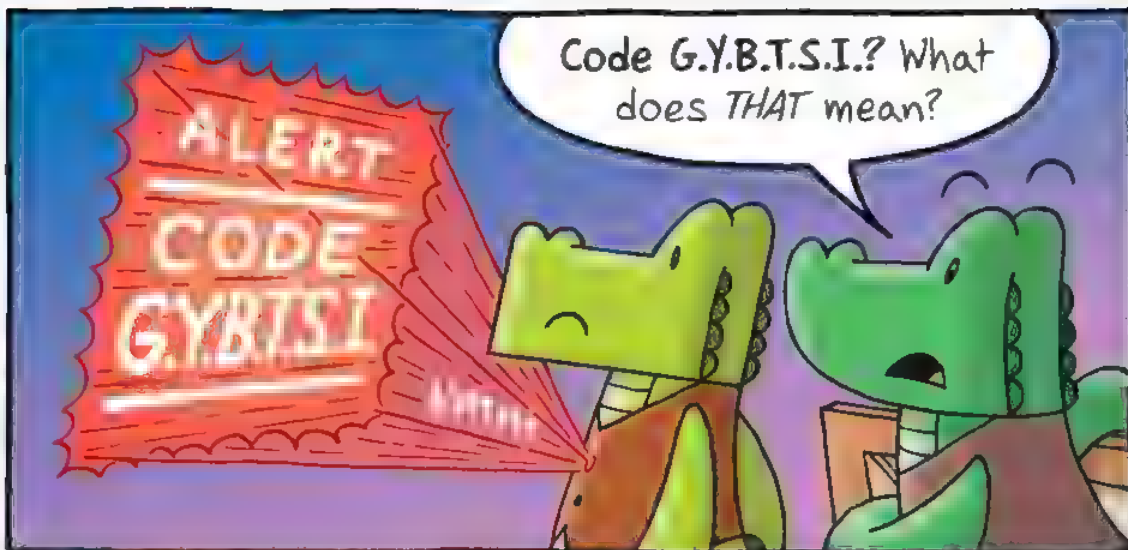










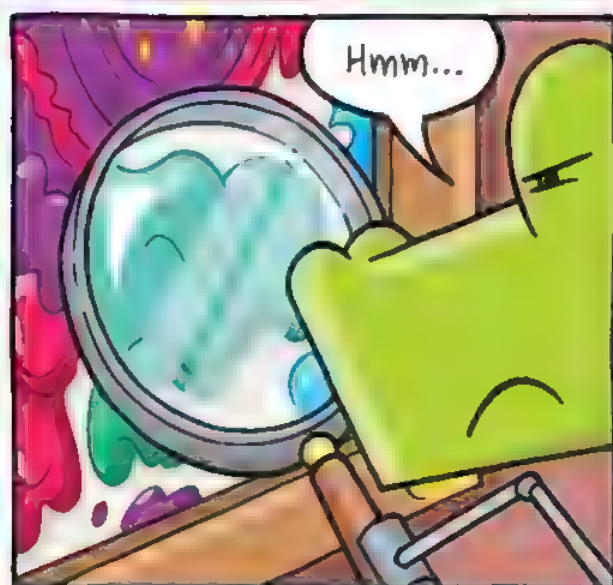


Chapter 14



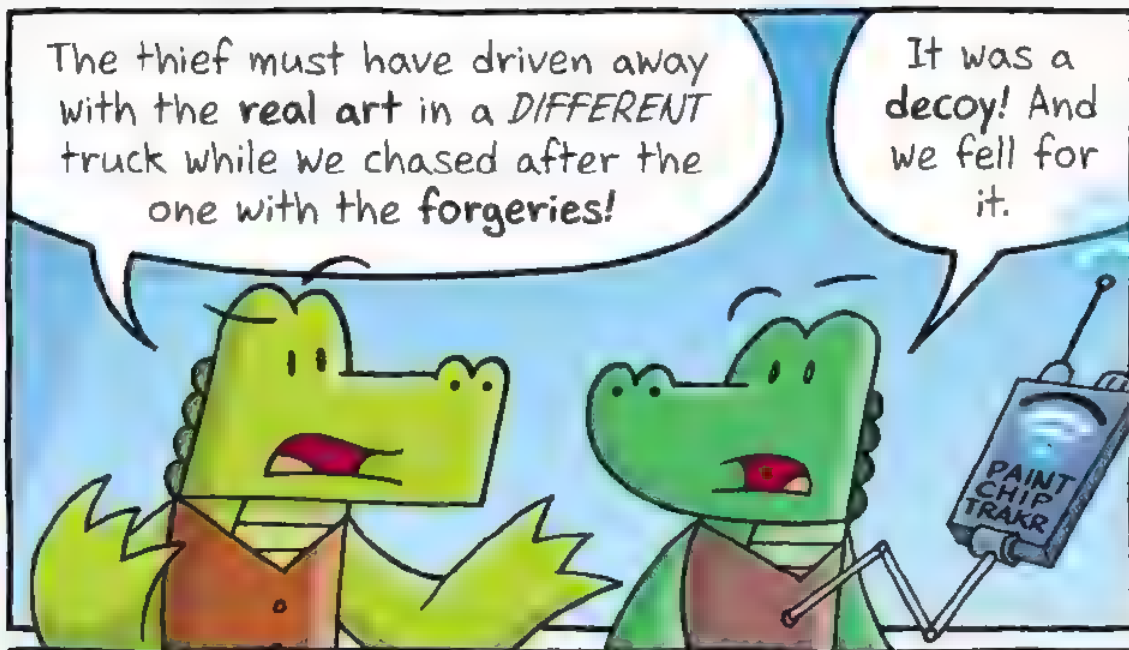






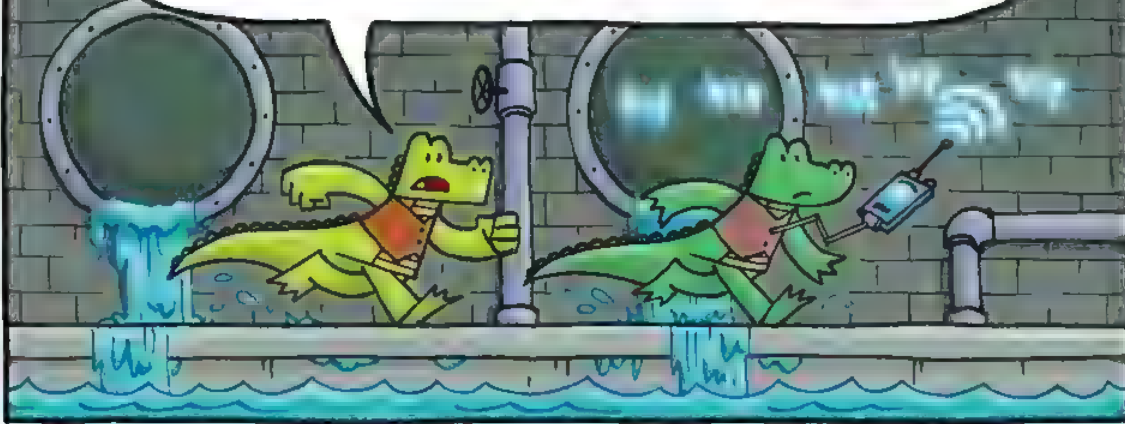




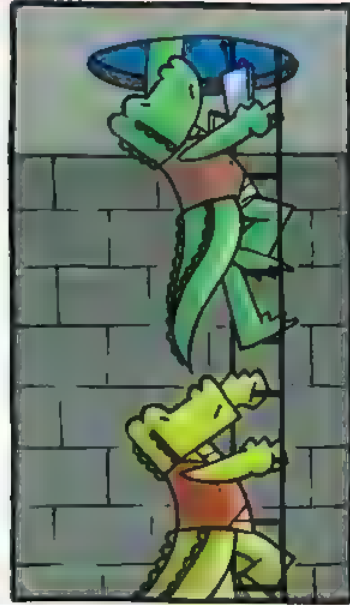


Chapter 15

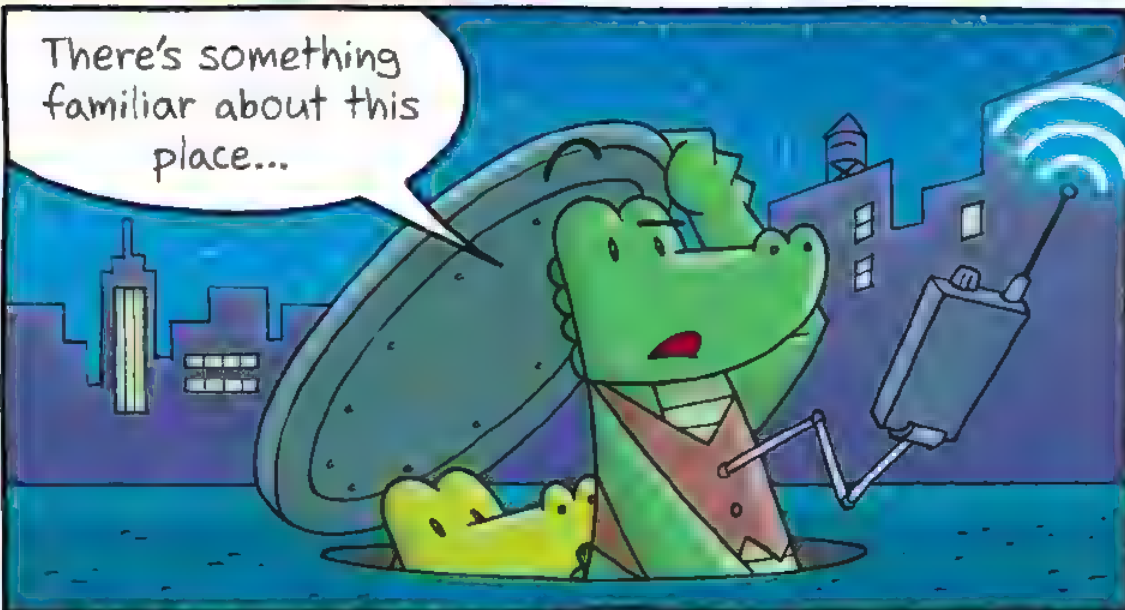
The thief can't have gotten far. It hasn't been that long since the gala.



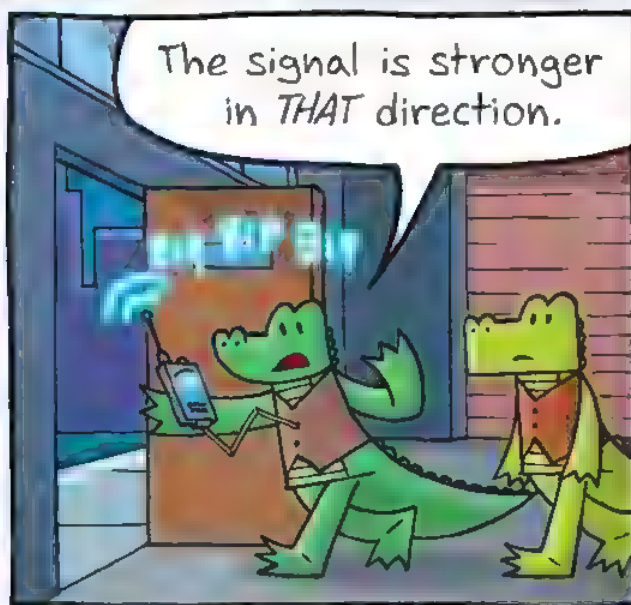
THIS IS IT! My painting is somewhere above us!

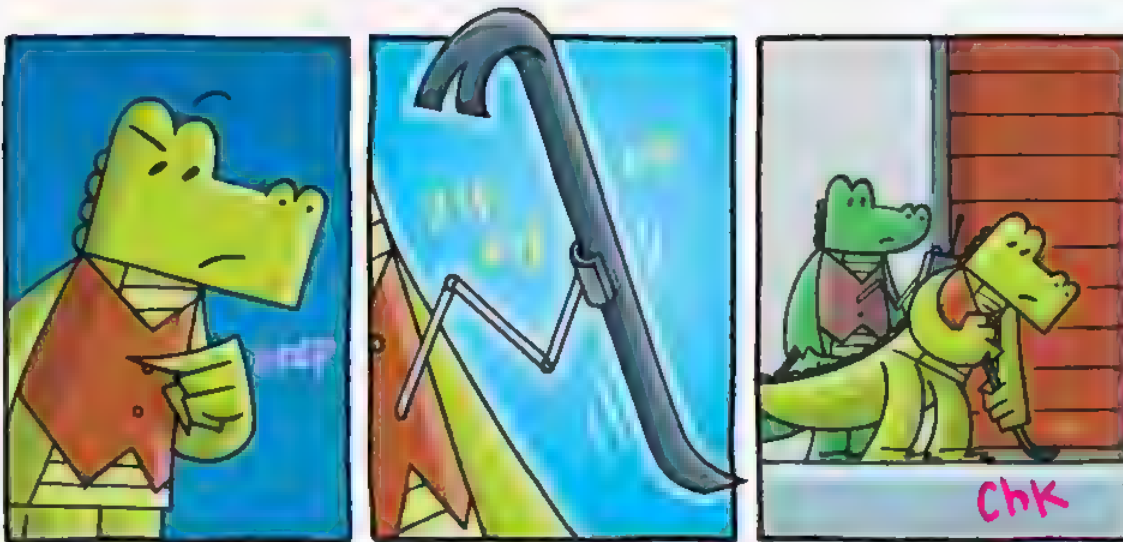


There's something familiar about this place...









The missing masterpieces! And also your painting!



Let's make
sure it really
is mine...

Yup!



Whoever the forger is,
they're good, but they
missed my signature.



Brash! The tracker *WASN'T* out of alignment when we first found my painting. Because *THAT* wasn't *MY* painting. The tracker was pointing to my painting in *THIS* building the whole time!



So if the **REAL** art has been in here all along...then the paintings we returned to the museum were the **fakes**?

≡GASP!≡

The thief **WANTED** their forgeries to be found!

They painted their copies here, then moved them next door.



This **TOO OBVIOUS** hiding spot **WAS** meant to trick whoever showed up into searching the other building.



The copies of the original paintings were made to pull off a **switcheroo**, so the forgeries would get put on display at the gala. Our suspect must be—



Seriously, Mango? This is basic detective stuff!
MMO stands for **M**eans, **M**otive, and **O**ppportunity.

I knew that.
I just wanted
to see if *YOU*
knew that.

Panksy's an artist. And
a prankster. He probably has
the **MEANS** to create forgeries.

The **curator** insured the
art for millions. Money makes
for a pretty tempting **MOTIVE**.

And the **caterer**
gave everyone food poisoning,
which created the **OPPORTUNITY**
to steal back the forgeries.

So...were they working together or separately?
Did **ONE** of them do it, or did they **ALL** do it?
And if the thief already *HAS* the real art here...



...*WHY* would they try
to steal *BACK* the
forgeries?



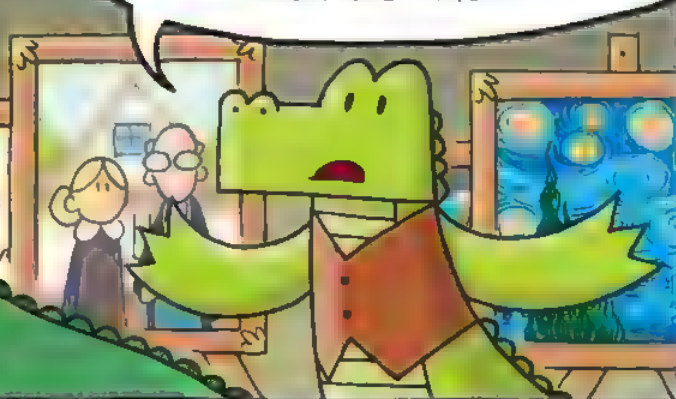
Hmm... To answer that,
we may have to go all the
way back to the
beginning.

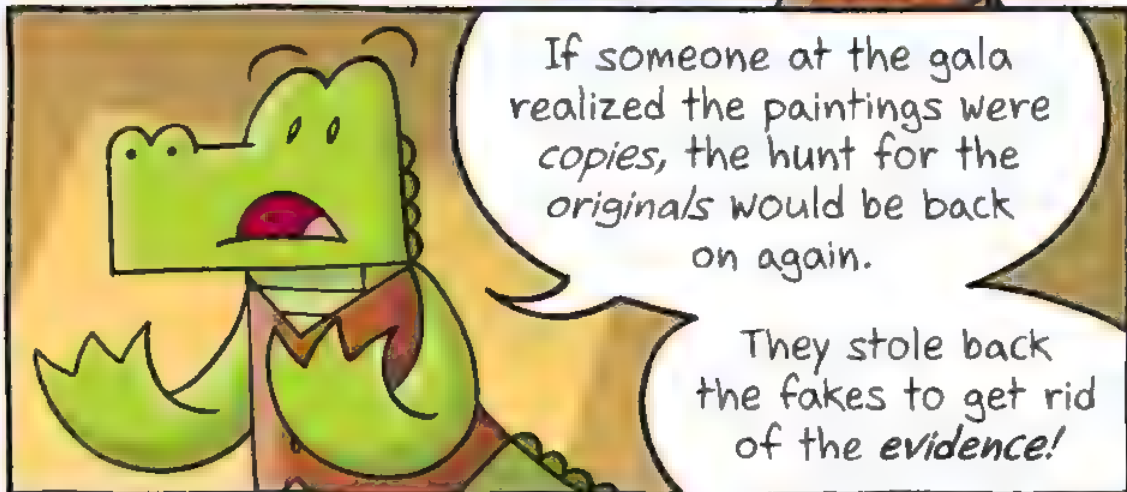
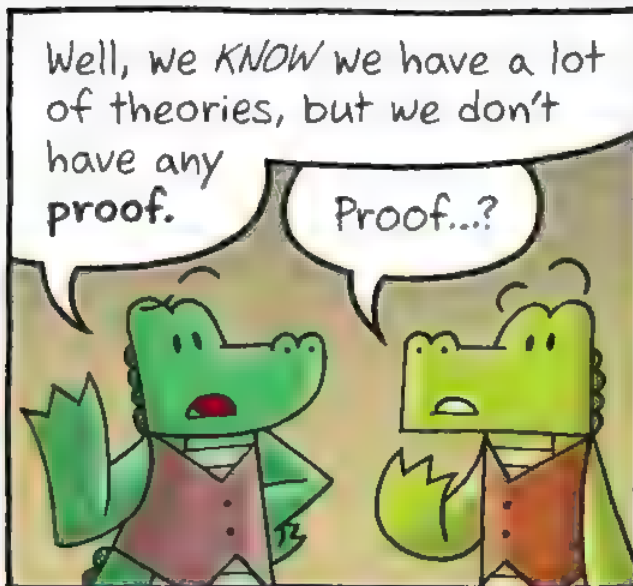


Welp, I'll start
flippin' pages...



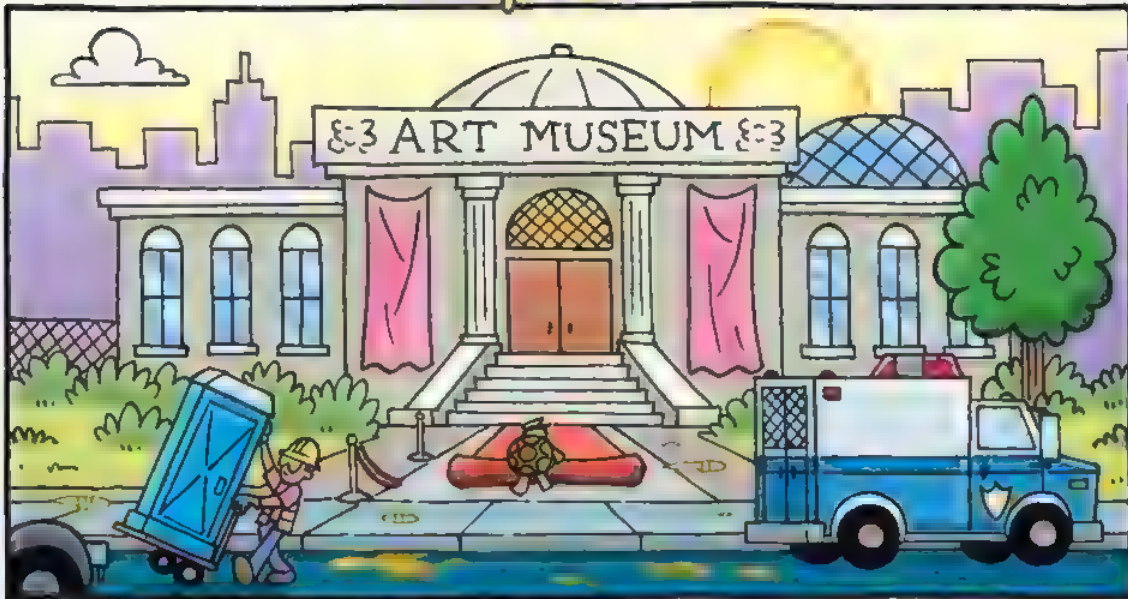
No, Mango. I mean we need
to forget all we know...or
THINK we know.



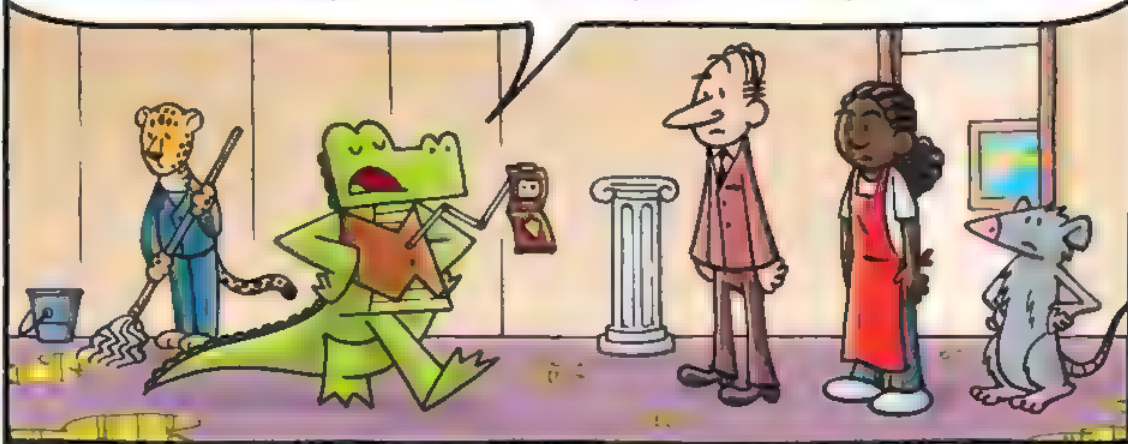




Chapter 16



I am Brash, an **InvestiGator** for S.U.I.T.!
You're probably wondering why I invited you all here.



Invited? I work
here! I've been
here since last
night!

Someone stole my catering
truck, and no one's offered
me a ride home!

And I've got
nowhere better
to be!





...but no amount of money would be worth *ruining* the museum's reputation. I'd never be able to throw another gala again. And that's my *favorite part* of running a museum!



A flimsy excuse!

CATERER...

Uh...

I'm sorry, I never asked your name...



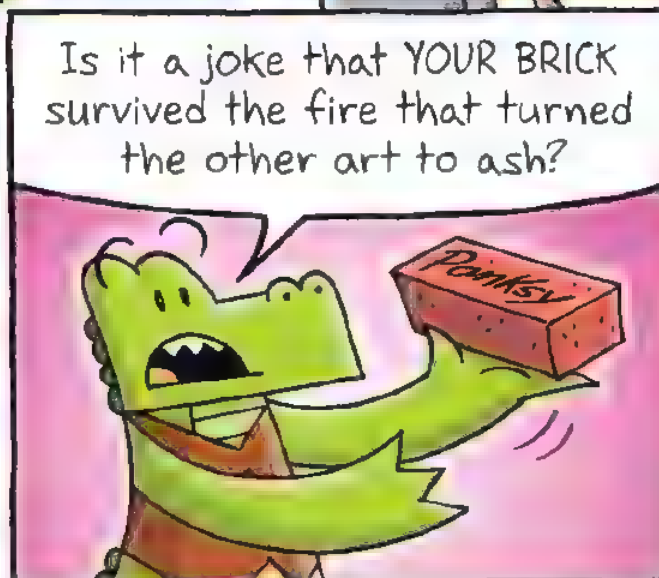
No one ever does, and it's *SO RUDE!*

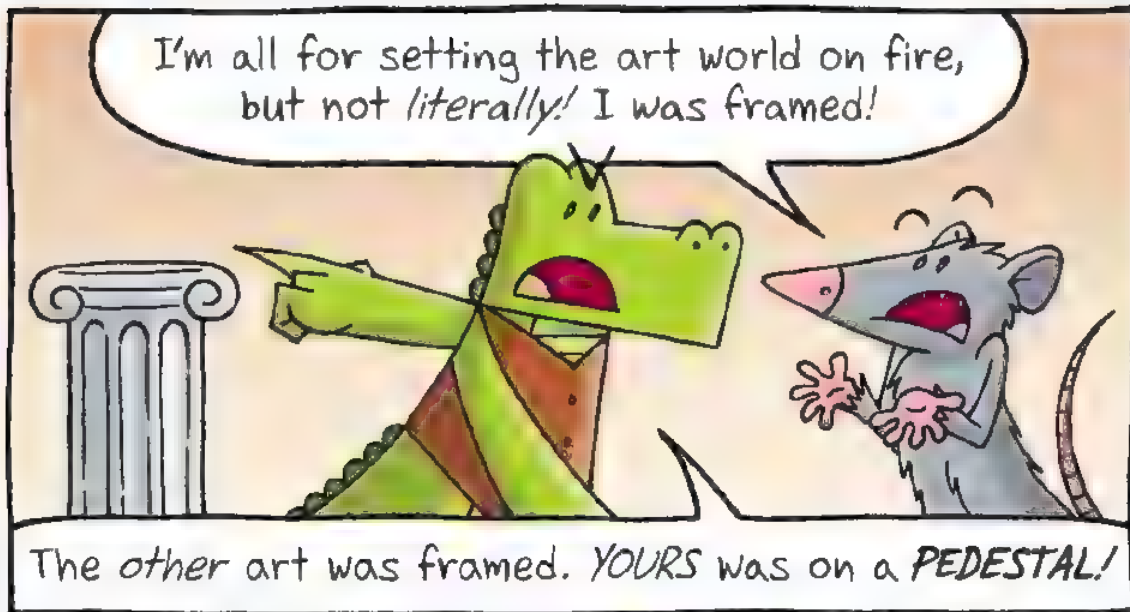


CATERER SORUDE! To empty the museum and leave the paintings ripe for stealing, you gave everyone **FOOD POISONING!**



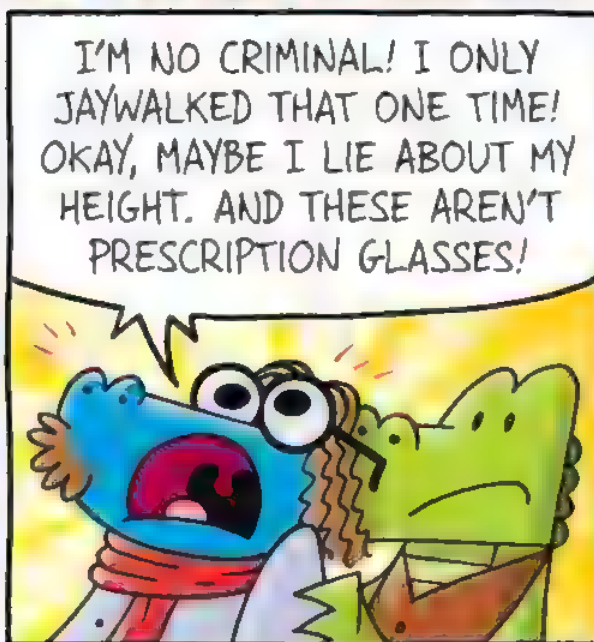
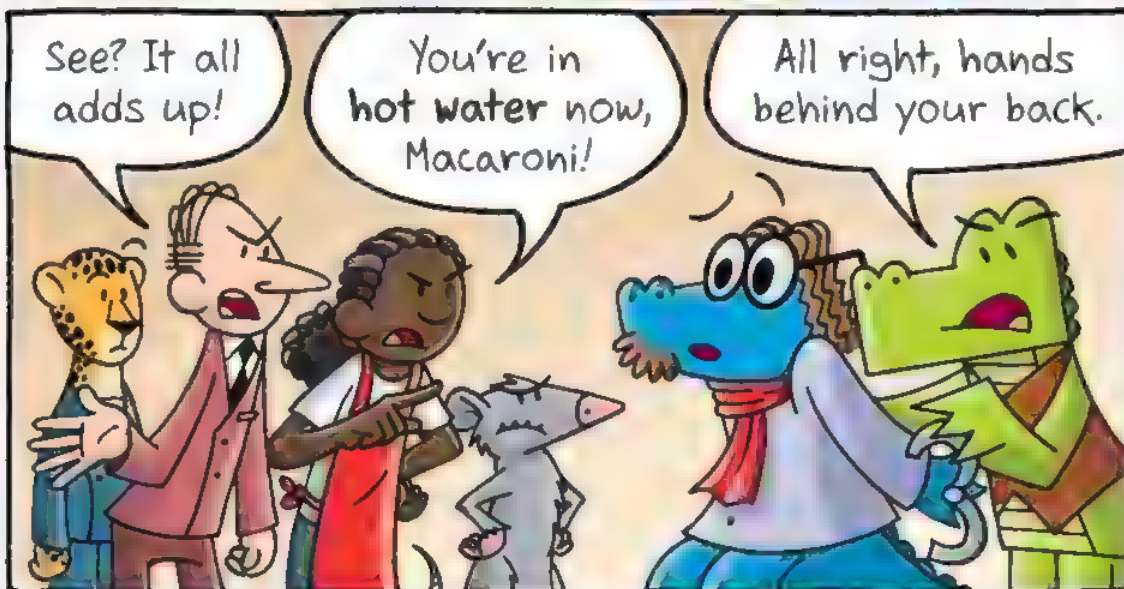
I didn't *mean* to. I only found out about the **MOLD** in the hors d'oeuvres after it was *too late!*

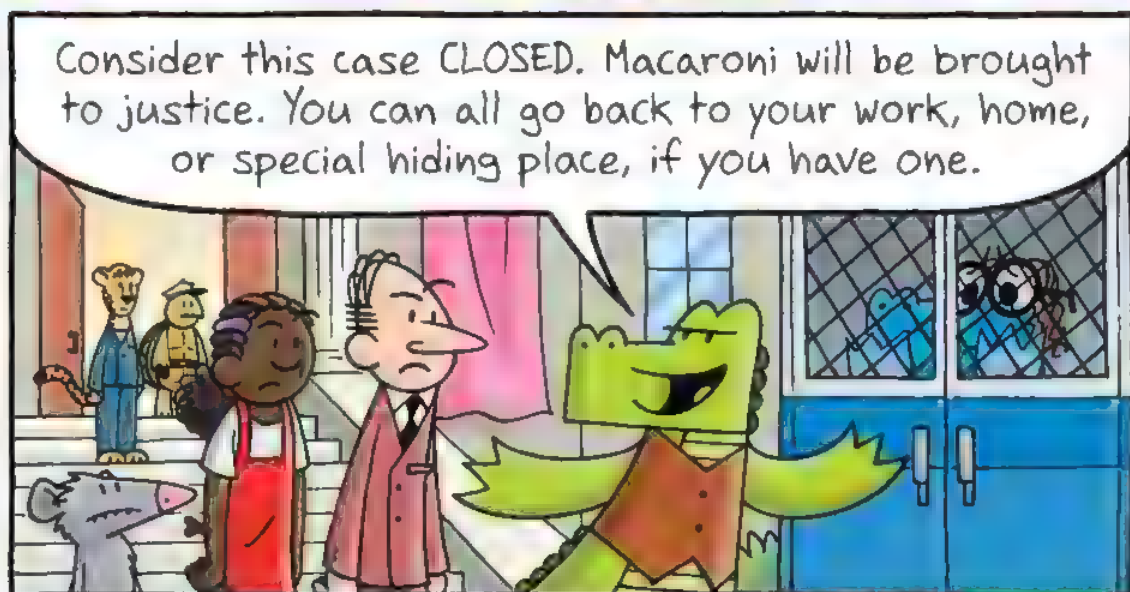








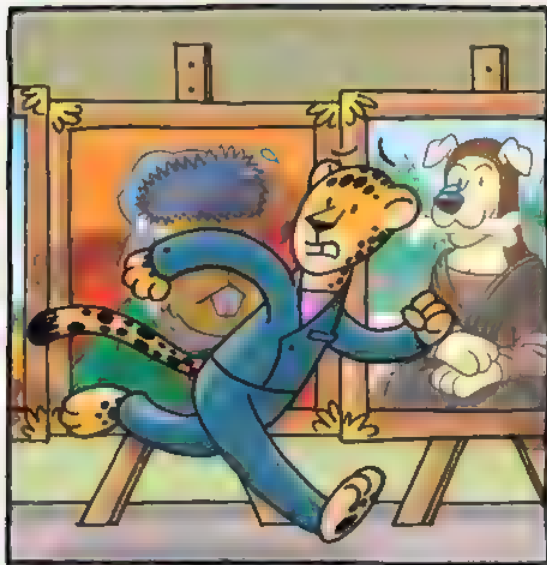
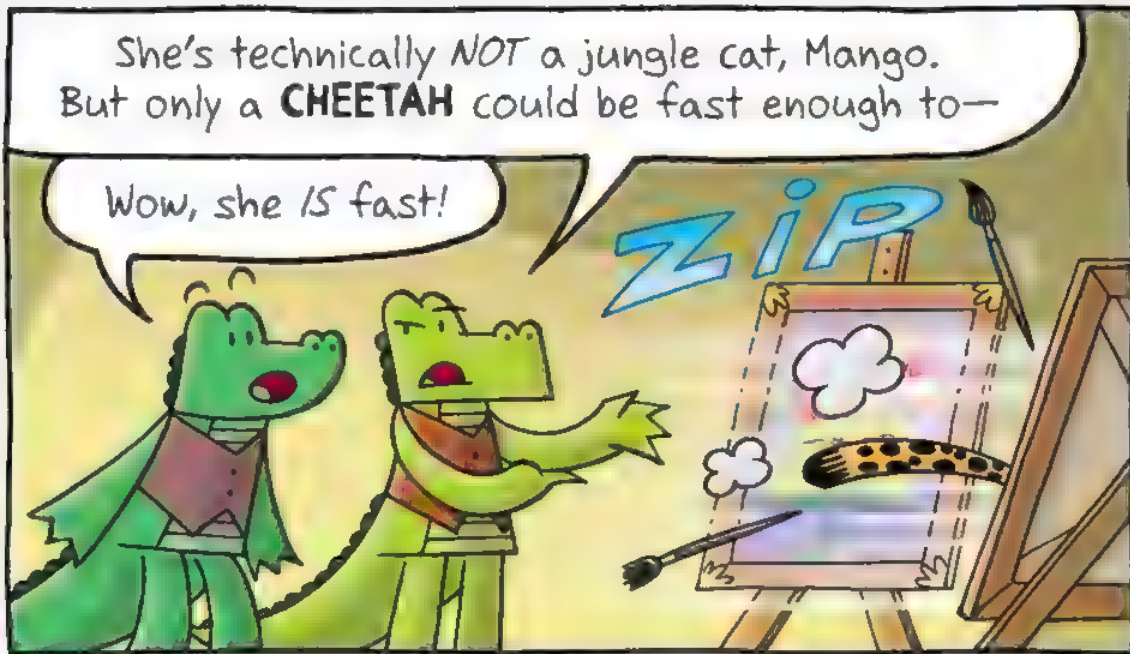






Chapter 17







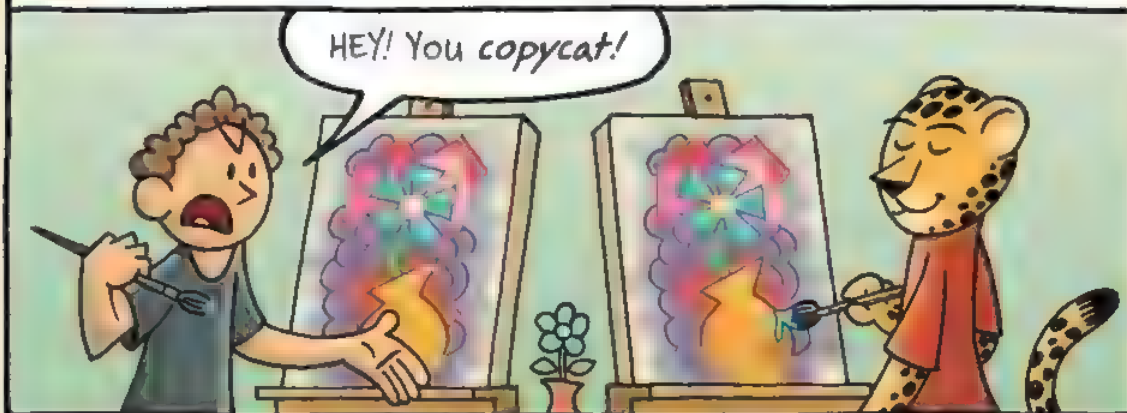




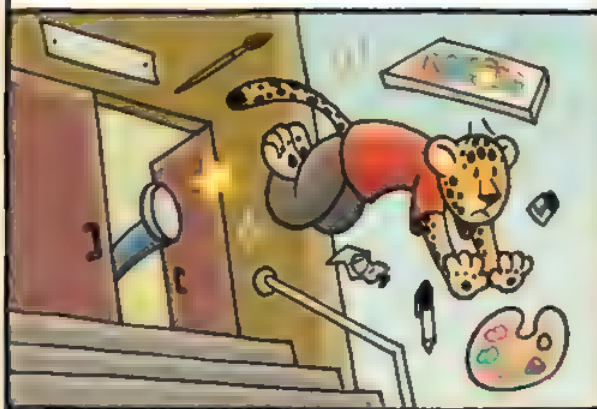
I've loved art ever since I was a little kid. I'd spend my time admiring it, studying it, and copying other people's illustrations that I liked.



I went to art school, and as other students found their artistic voices, what I was best at was quickly mimicking everyone else's styles.



Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but the school still kicked me out!

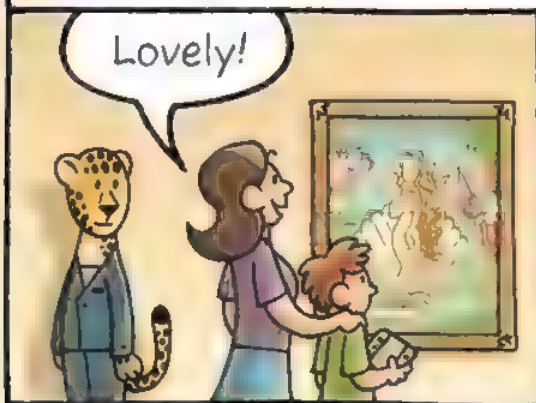


Eventually, I got a job at the museum.

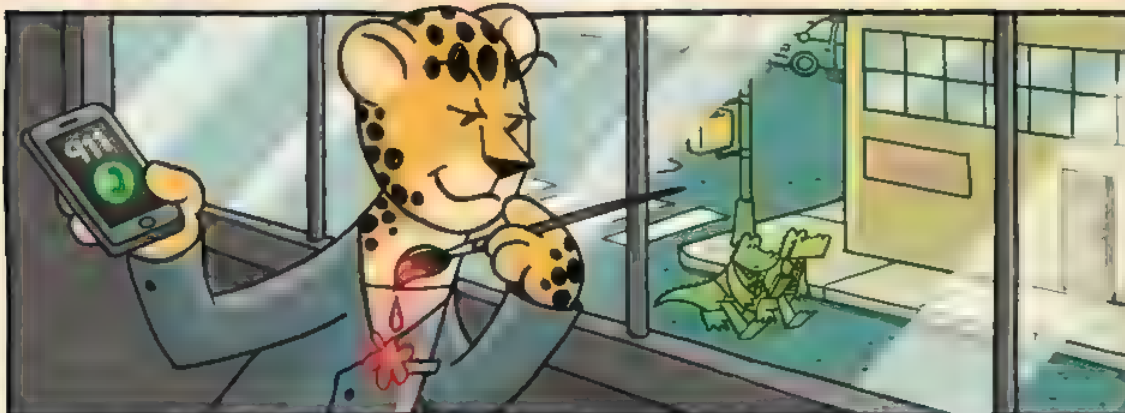




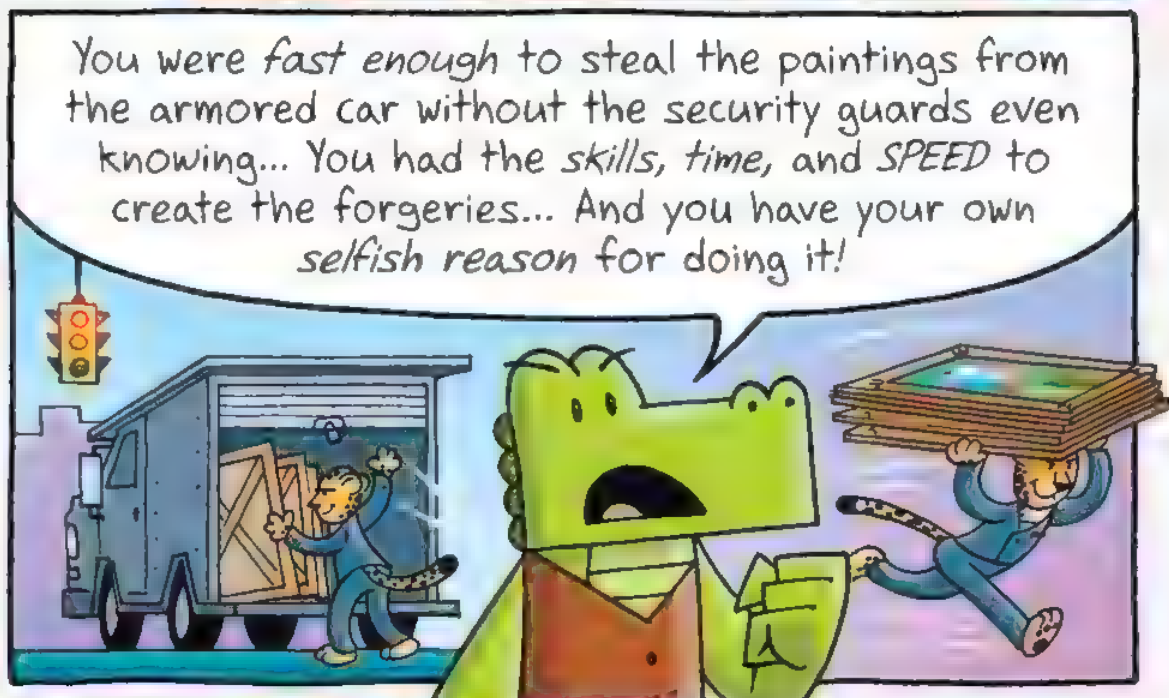
I've spent years looking at paintings. I mean, **REALLY** looking. Every detail, every brushstroke. No one appreciated them as much as I did!



So when the most famous paintings in history were coming to the museum for the gala, I was certain that if I painted copies and swapped them with the originals, no one would even notice.



I could keep the originals all to myself, and after the gala, **MY** art would be returned to museums all over the world for people to casually glance at.



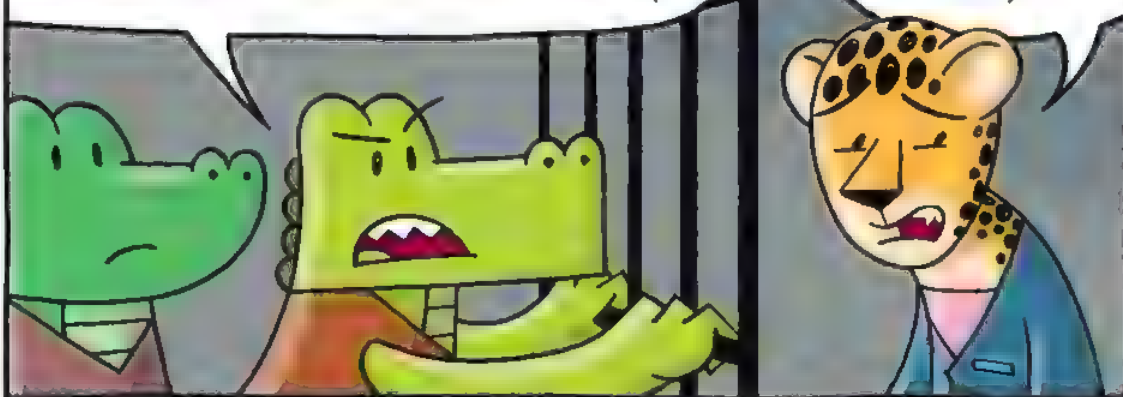
Except you realized your forgeries *WEREN'T* perfect.
So *YOU* poisoned the hors d'oeuvres because you
were afraid someone was going to catch a mistake.



I *WANTED* people to *LOOK* at my art. Not *THROW UP*
on it. When everyone got sick, my plan was *ruined!*
My forgery skills can hold up to scrutiny, but the
paint can't hold up to **STOMACH ACID.**



So that's when you decided to
evacuate the museum, **destroy**
the evidence, and **frame** Panksy!



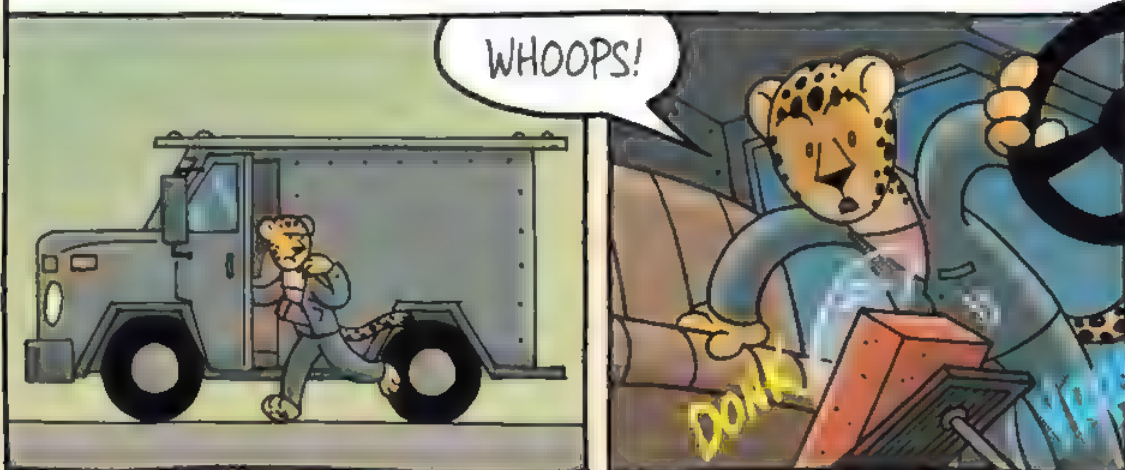
That was
an accident!
Mostly...



With the museum emptied, I thought I could sneak out my copies and repaint them. On the way out, I saw Panksy's ridiculous brick.



Before I had a chance to lock the back of the armored car, the brick fell onto the gas pedal!



I never intended to DESTROY my paintings. But if everyone *believed* the real ones were lost in a fire, at least I could still keep them all to myself.



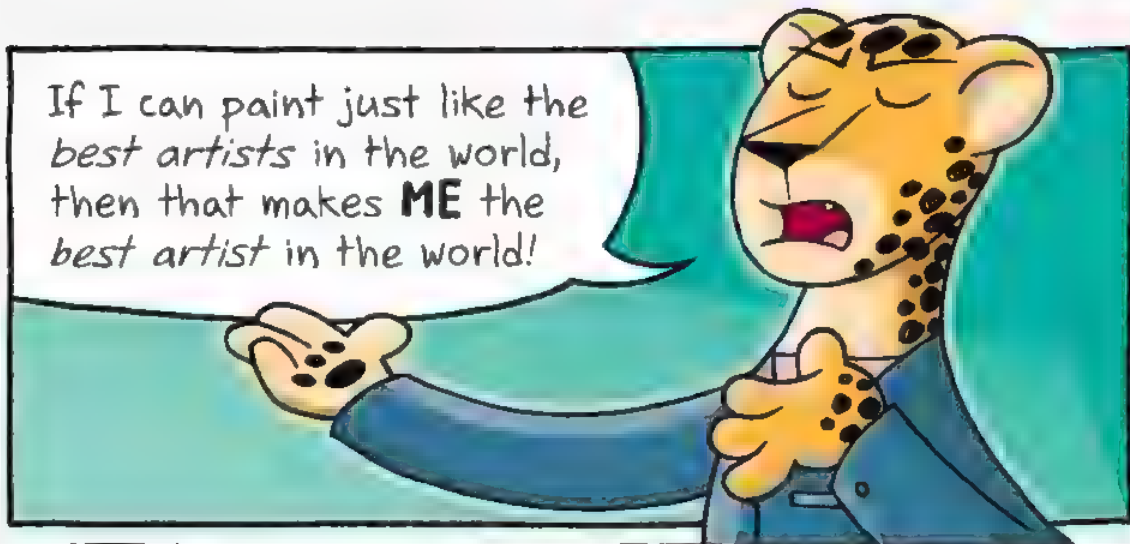
I knew it would eventually come out that Macaroni Ancheese was *innocent*. But I figured I had time to paint new forgeries and hatch another plan to pass them off as the genuine articles.



Your phonies won't fool anyone now!



But I proved my point!



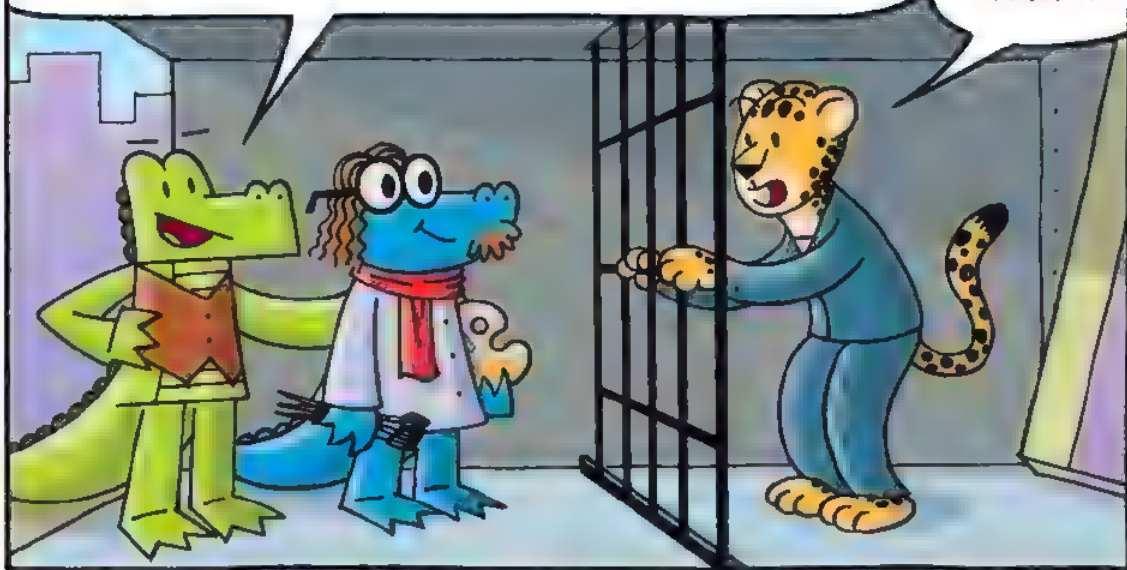


Z-z-z
Z-z-z
Z-z-z



For someone claiming to be so observant,
you couldn't tell this getup was a *disguise*!

Wha...?
How...?



And I thought I **BLUE** my
cover with my **CHEESY**
Macaroni jokes.



I've been fooled...

...by a
fraud...





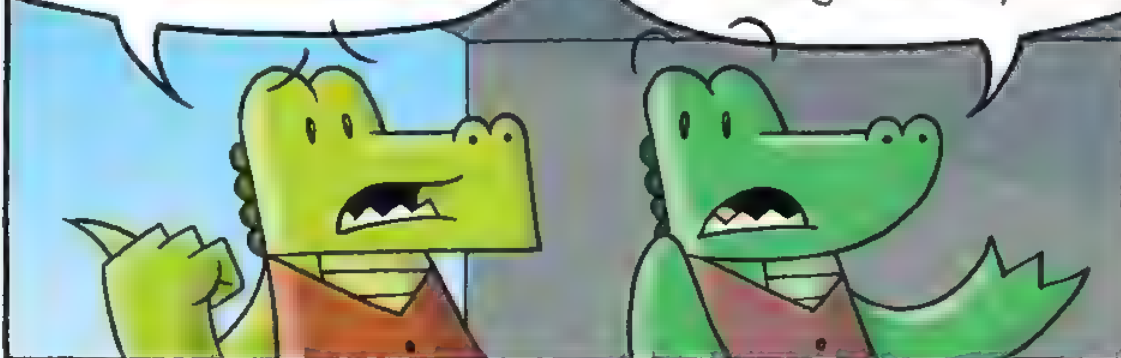
So my paintings of other paintings are just drawings that **someone else DREW???**

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REAL ANYMORE!



Uh... Let's get out of here before the author finds a way to break a **FIFTH** wall.

Yeah, that'll just set Savanna loose. And her grip on reality is loose enough already!



All thanks to the **InvestiGators!**



I wouldn't pat myself on the back for *THAT*, Mango.

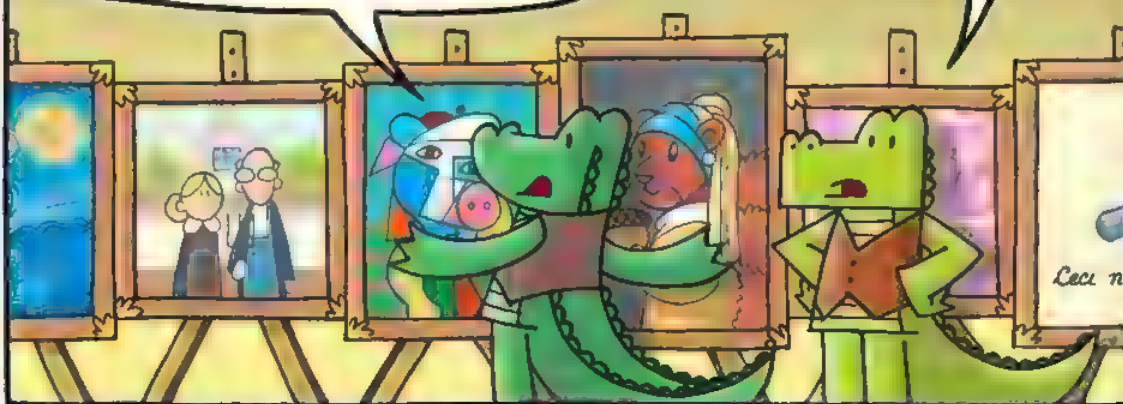
Yes, we've recovered the art and caught the culprit. But though Savanna has committed crimes, she's certainly not EVIL. Copying the art isn't where she went wrong. It was her *belief* that there is only one definition of art, one criteria to judge an artist by, and only one way to *appreciate* art.

Hopefully with some help, Savanna can come to realize she was *mistaken*.



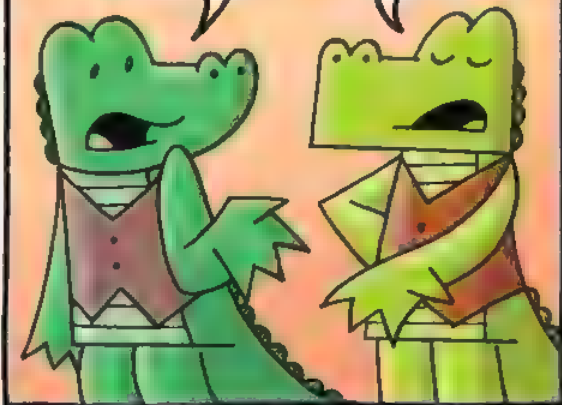
Speaking of which, we need to be *takin'* these paintings to the museum again.

For the FIRST time, technically.

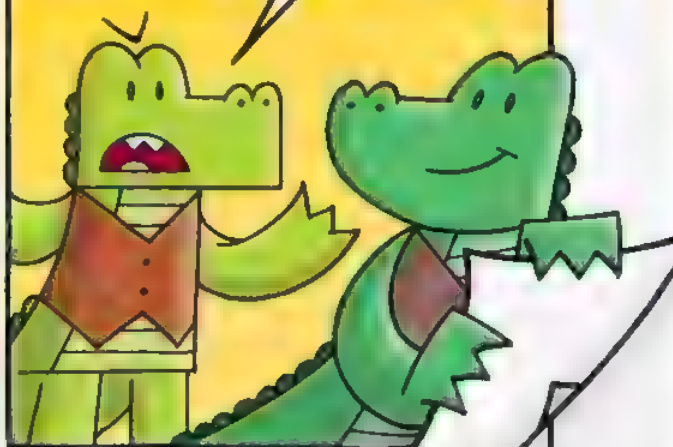


Whaddya say... skip ahead?

Skip ahead.



But **NO COW DETOURS!**



Chapter 18

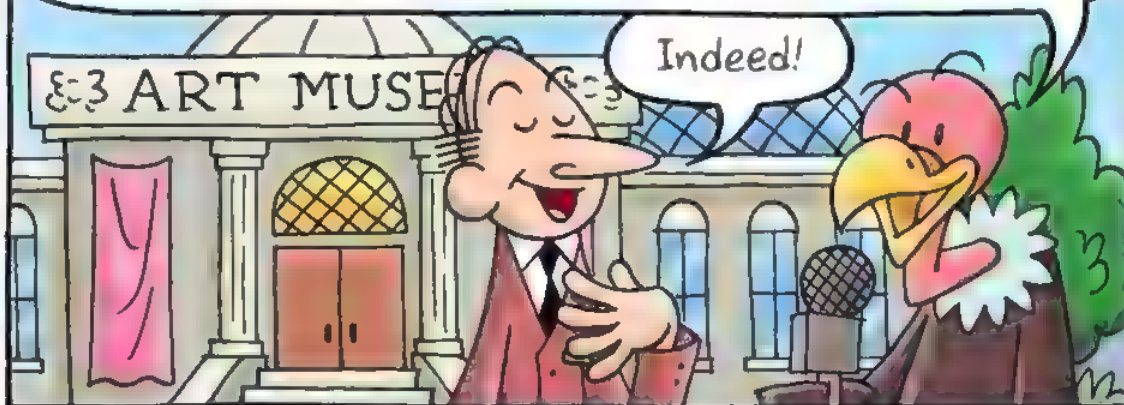
The **COPYCAT** is in the bag! And by *BAG* I mean *JAIL*. This **cheetah** turned out to be a **CHEATER** who tried to replace historical masterpieces with her own imitations.



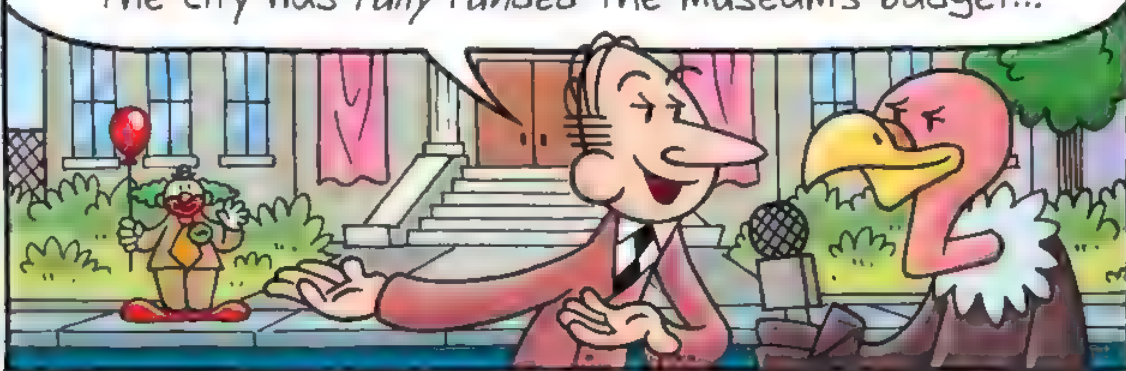
For more, here's Vohnda Featherneck with the museum curator, Thelonious Snort.



Yes, Cici. The priceless art is back and the museum's reputation is intact. In fact, all this excitement has generated a *renewed interest* in the art world.



The exhibit will be extended and opened to the public free of charge, since *NO ONE* got to see the actual paintings anyway. And thanks to Councilman Fluffles, the city has fully funded the museum's budget...



...in exchange for the museum dedicating a wing to **serious balloon art!**

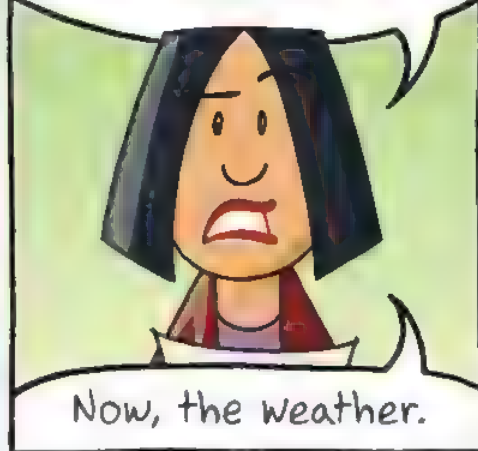
All the museum's expenses will be paid. Including the hospital bills for everyone who got food poisoning!

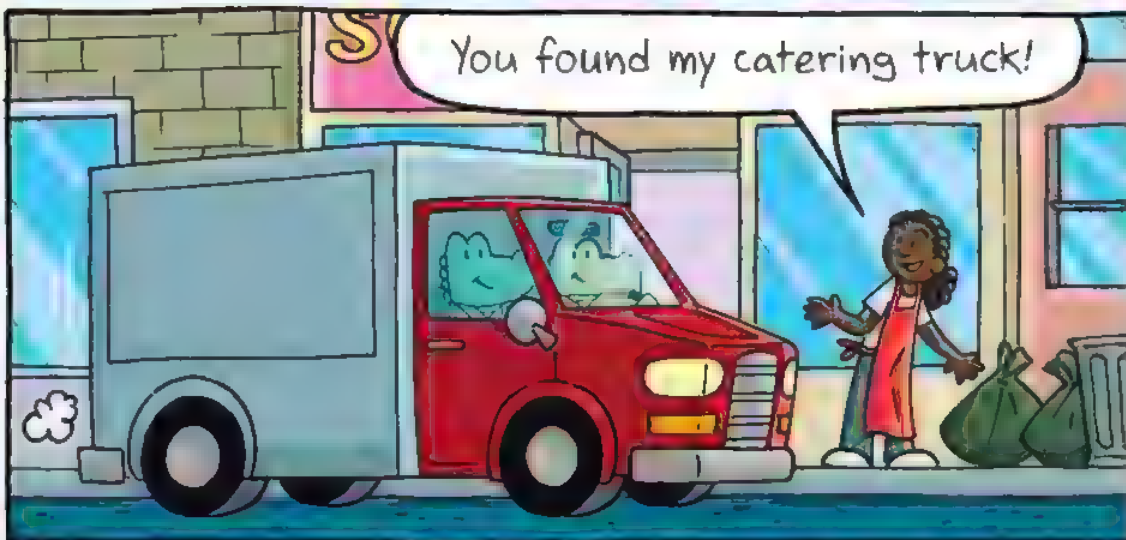


Well, let's hope everyone runs *TO* the museum and doesn't *GET* the runs *AT* the museum. Back to you, Cici!



Thanks for painting *THAT* picture for me, Vohnda.





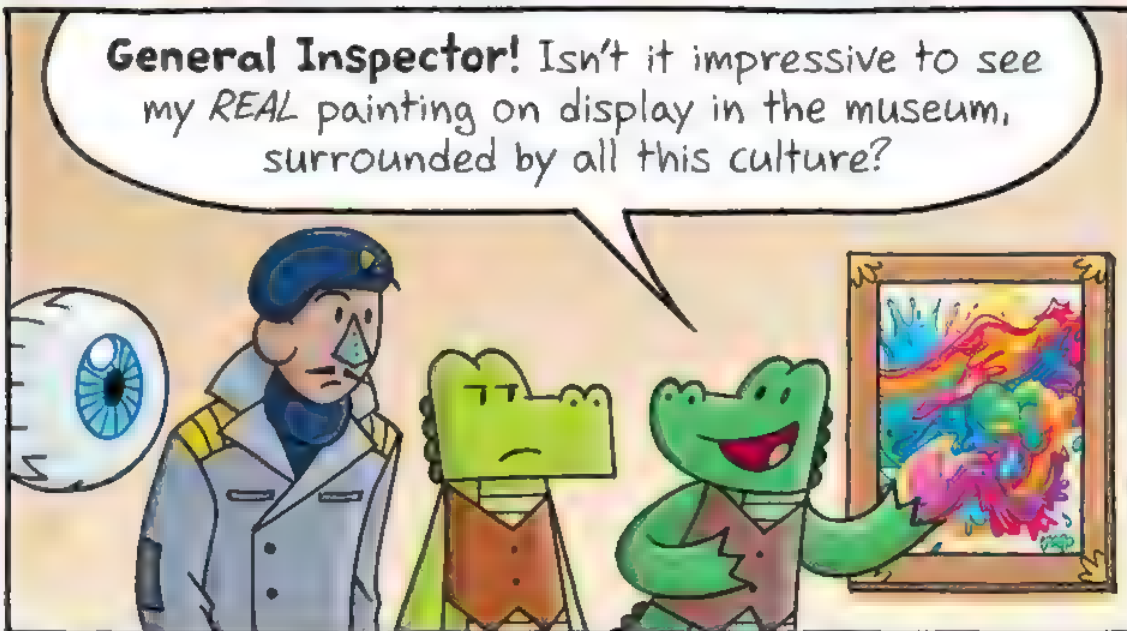


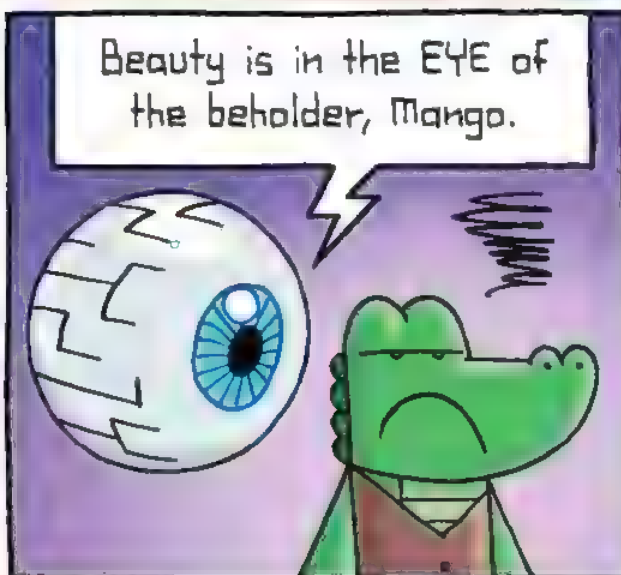






Epilogue





I was UNDERCOVER to catch the art thief. I'm an AGENT of S.U.I.T.!



Wow! Now *THAT'S* what I call *performance art!*



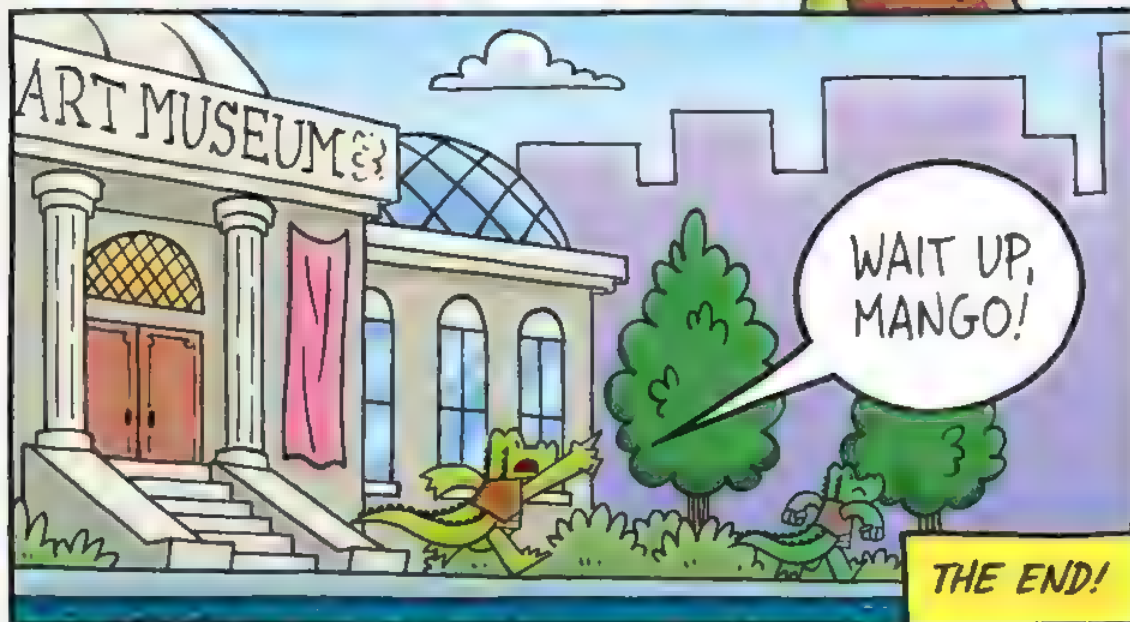
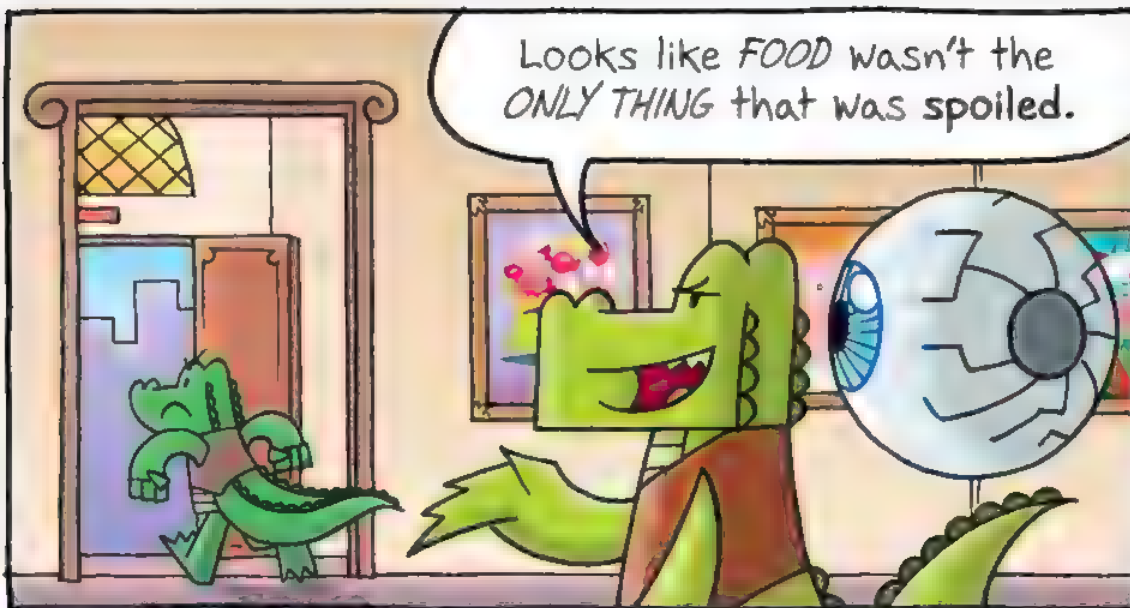
It's just like the end of **COLE'S LAW: THE MOVIE**, when Detective Cole joins Agents of S.A.L.A.D.: Super Awesome Lettuce And Disguises.



THAT'S IT!

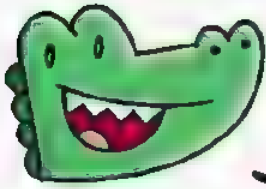
IF YOU NEED ME, I'LL BE AT THE MOVIES!





INVESTIGATORS

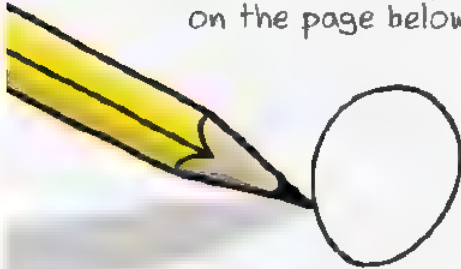
How to draw the COPYCAT



And remember:
Copying is how many
artists first learn
how to draw!



1. Start with an upside-down egg shape, with the narrower part by her chin. Leave plenty of room on the page below for her body.



2. Draw half-circles on each side for ears and a triangle for her nose.



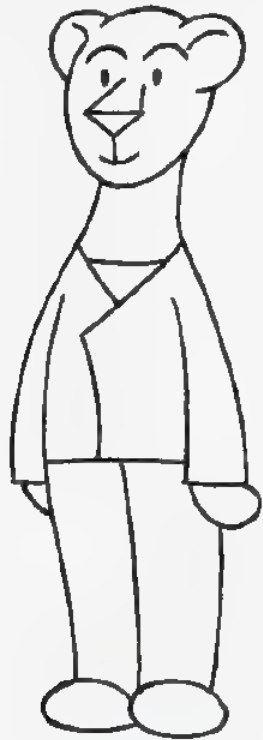
3. Draw a shape similar to a bowling pin or a soda bottle for her body.



4. Add arms and legs, plus hands and feet. Erase any unnecessary lines.



5. Draw facial features like eyes and a mouth, and her jacket and blouse.



6. Give her fingers and toes, and clothing details. Don't forget her tail!



7. This cheetah's not complete without her spots! Add some color to make your drawings really come alive.



8. Lastly, ERASE HER BEFORE SHE ESCAPES!



Hey, I haven't seen or heard **Cilantro** at all in this whole book!



Well, chameleons **ARE** hard to see. But in Cilantro's case...



...she's off on her **OWN** case! In the new series, **Agents of S.U.I.T.!**

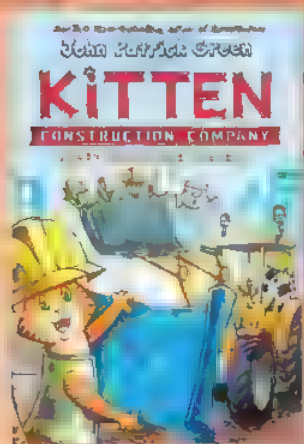
Ooh!
I can't wait to read it!



Mango and Brash will return in their next book, *All Tide Up!*

For the latest in Gator news, activities, and more, visit **InvestiGatorsBooks.com**

Read the John Patrick Green Collection!





Let's see
how you
like it!

Mmmph!

Investi GATORS

Heist and Seek



written and illustrated by
John Patrick Green

with color by Wes Dzioba

:01

First Second
New York

Praise for *InvestiGators*
"A sugar rush manifested as a graphic novel."

—Kirkus Reviews

The *InvestiGators* CANVAS the city for a thief...

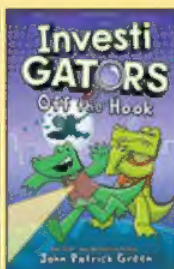


... who has truly mastered the ART of crime!



Have Mango and Brash PAINTED themselves into a corner?

THE WHOLE SERIES IS
A WORK OF
ART!



Cover art © 2022 by John Patrick Green

Cover design by John Patrick Green and Molly Johanson



:01

First Second
New York